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THE ETHNIC DIMENSION OF ALLIANCE FORMATION: ALIGNMENT PATTERNS IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

by

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The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the alignment behaviors of Armenia and Azerbaijan during and after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the effects of ethnic identities on these alignments. The literature on alliances is generally covered by realist scholars, but these scholars do not concentrate on domestic politics and fail to include the ethnic composition of states. However, conflicting parties in ethnic conflicts perceive each other through an ethnic identity lens, and differences between identities cause people to mobilize. Therefore, ethnic composition can affect the alignment preferences of states. Today, Armenia has developed better relations with Iran and Russia; on the other hand, Azerbaijan sides with Turkey and the United States. This thesis investigates how both ethnicity and power politics affect the alignment policies during and after an ethnic conflict.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the alignment behaviors of Armenia and Azerbaijan during and after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the effects of ethnic identities on these alignments. The literature on alliances is generally covered by realist scholars, but these scholars do not concentrate on domestic politics and fail to include the ethnic composition of states. However, conflicting parties in ethnic conflicts perceive each other through an ethnic identity lens, and differences between identities cause people to mobilize. Therefore, ethnic composition can affect the alignment preferences of states. Today, Armenia has developed better relations with Iran and Russia; on the other hand, Azerbaijan sides with Turkey and the United States. This thesis investigates how both ethnicity and power politics affect the alignment policies during and after an ethnic conflict.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Ethnic problems have been an important driving factor of international relations especially since the last decades of the twentieth century. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union strongly affected the emergence of these conflicts. The new successor states of the Soviet Union and of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia faced many problems concerning borders and minorities. One example of these problems is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the South Caucasus, which is the consequence of unresolved tension between Armenians and Azeris during Soviet rule. Disputes about Nagorno-Karabakh started before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the problem is not resolved yet. For many decades now, both Azerbaijan and Armenia have made different claims about the legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh, but neither of them controlled the region for long periods.

In February 1988, Armenian leaders in the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast voted to request a transfer from Azerbaijan to the Armenian SSR. But Azerbaijan did not approve this request.[1] Following these events, the conflict erupted between Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and Azeris. Armenia actively supported the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Clashes continued until a ceasefire was concluded in May 1994. The remnants of this conflict were terrible: "About 30,000 people lost their lives during the conflict and more than one million were driven out of their homes."[2] Twenty percent of Azerbaijan's territory (Nagorno-Karabakh included) was left under Armenian control.[3]

The South Caucasus region is increasing in importance because of its geostrategic position. Gradually increasing energy demands require new and secure oil reserves for the world market. Although the Middle East holds most of the world's oil reserves, the unstable politics of Middle Eastern states create concern about the future of oil policies.

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[1] "Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace," *International Crisis Group*, Europe Report 167, (11 October 2005):4 http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3740 (accessed May 15, 2007).

[2] BBC News, July 7, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3052410.stm (accessed May 16, 2007).

[3] Sedat Laciner, "The Mistakes of Armenia and the Success of Azerbaijan" *The Journal of Turkish Weekly,* July 09, 2007 http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=46656 (accessed July 15, 2007).

In addition, Russian hegemony over the oil supply is a cause for concern among the European leaders since this hegemony can be used as leverage in conflicts between Western countries and Russia. Diversification of oil resources has become a vital interest for the main oil-consuming states, and the Caspian region, with its close proximity to European states, offers a great opportunity. For that reason, "The Caspian Sea region has become a central focal point for untapped oil and natural gas resources from the southern portion of the former Soviet Union."[4] The South Caucasus stands as a bridge for the transfer of oil and gas from Caspian and Asian resources.

But the main problem about the transfer of oil through the South Caucasus is instability such as

> … regional conflicts and separatist movements, often against a background of religious strife, difficult process of democratization in weak states; flourishing activities of mafia networks and trafficking of various types directed by criminal organizations; the infiltration of networks linked to the international terrorism: security of oil and gas pipelines; ecological risks and massive economic underdevelopment…[5]

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is at the heart of the instability in the South Caucasus and threatens the future of pipeline projects. Because of this unresolved conflict, longer pipeline routes are sometimes preferred in order to increase the security of transfer. The pipeline projects have created competition among the major powers for influence over the region and pipeline projects. Every new project is countered by an alternative project by another group. Each side is trying to keep the others out of this market by determining pipeline routes. Unless the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is resolved, there will be no overall stability in the region.

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[4]Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, *Caspian Sea,* http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Caspian/Background.html (accessed February 4, 2007).

[5]"The South Caucasus: A Challenge for the EU,*" Institute for Security Studies European Union Paris*, Chaillot Papers, no. 65 (December 2003):7 http://www.iss.europa.eu/chaillot/chai65e.pdf (accessed March 2, 2007).

A. PURPOSE

Each major power has great interest in the region. Turkey wants to be a part of the pipeline projects and any conflict in the region threatens Turkey's interests. Besides, this conflict will determine Turkey's relations with other Turk states in Asia. By not intervening in Karabakh, Turkey risks alienating the other new Turk states, and could lose its position of leadership among them. On the other hand, Iran is concerned with Azerbaijan because of its own Azeri population. Besides, increasing Turkish influence in the region and Asia can improve Turkey's role in the Muslim world, and a Western-looking Turkey might be a more desirable example than that of Iran. Iran's struggle for leadership in the Islamic world might deteriorate in the face of a powerful Turkish image.

Figure 1.   Map of Nagorno-Karabakh and Neighbor Countries[6]

Russia lost most of its influence in Ukraine and Georgia after pro-Western administrations took power in these countries. Therefore, Russia does not want to lose Armenia in the South Caucasus. Besides, Russia has fears about increasing Turkish

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[6]Map of Nagorno-Karabakh http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1222.cfm (accessed August 28, 2007).

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influence in Asia. An Armenian "barrier" would prevent the direct connection between Turkey and other Turk Republics. Russian and Iranian influence in the region can have negative effects on American interests. For that reason, Azeri oil reserves and Armenia's close relation with Iran and Russia will determine American policy.

In short, energy resources, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and unresolved problems made the region a prime competition arena for the major powers. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia launched a struggle to find external patrons that would deter their opponent and provide support in negotiations. The major powers wanted to have an influence over this important region. Thus, this conflict resulted in alignment patterns which the realist literature cannot explain without including ethnic politics at the domestic level.

Figure 2.   Map of Ethno-Linguistic Distribution in the Southern Caucasus, 2004[7]

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[7]Map of Ethno-Linguistic Distribution in the Southern Caucasus, 2004, http://www.envsec.org/southcauc/maps/ethnic.jpg (accessed August 28, 2007).

The majority of the Azerbaijan's population is Muslim. Azerbaijan's official language is Azerbaijani, which, like Turkish, is included in the Altaic family of languages. Azerbaijan has significant energy resources,[8] which Armenia lacks. Armenians are Christians and speak Armenian.[9] Although Azerbaijan's population is Muslim, Iran prefers to maintain relation with Armenia. There is a strong Armenian diaspora in the United States, but relations between Armenia and the United States are not as warm as one might expect.

It is clear that two factors are important in this conflict; the ethnic identity of the parties involved and competition for power. Therefore, this thesis will examine how the alignments were formed during and after the Nagorno-Karabakh war. For each alignment, the question of whether balancing or ethnic identity played a more significant role in creating that alignment will be assessed by referring to the literature on alliance and ethnicity.

B.   IMPORTANCE

Alliances are examined in detail by realist scholars, but they usually exclude intra-state politics. However, the main issue in ethnic conflicts is the internal dynamics of conflicting parties. When an ethnic tension arises, groups emphasize the boundaries of their ethnic identity. They try to maintain the group's identity within these boundaries. Small differences between people become very important and boundaries between different groups become very tight. If a group considers its identity threatened by another group, members of the threatened group will mobilize. Emotions drive the masses and irrational behaviors become normal in the mobilized group. Leaders in that group have to consider the fears of the group and act according to the group's feelings. At the state level, leaders in the administration have to follow the group's desires. For that reason, ethnic politics can affect the alignment policies of a state. Formation of an ethnic identity

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[8]Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html (accessed August 23, 2007).

[9]Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book*, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html (accessed August 23, 2007).

is analyzed in the literature about ethnicity. These scholars examine how identities are formed and how people mobilize to maintain their identity. On the other hand, literature about ethnic identity usually does not cover alliance behaviors. But ethnic conflict can shape alliance formation, and ethnic features might affect each side's alignment policy. Thus, this thesis will evaluate the role of domestic politics and ethnicity on alignment policies.

Another problem with realist thought is the sequencing of alliances. Realists do not evaluate other states' alliance behaviors; however, the decision to choose an ally might depend on other states' behaviors. Although sequencing of alignments is not considered in realist writings, it can be derived from the academic literature on path dependence, which asserts that "the past influences the future."[10] This term implies that an unforeseen event in history can change the flow of other events. In other words, a specific event can determine how other events will occur. This view can be applied to alliance policies as well. This thesis will examine how other states' behaviors affected alignment policies in Nagorno-Karabakh.

C   LITERATURE REVIEW

An analysis of alignment behavior in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has to merge three main areas of research: alliances in International Relations, ethnicity, and the conflict itself. Literature on Nagorno-Karabakh or International Relations generally fails to include one or two of these aspects, such as alignment theories or the role of ethnicity. While many theories are applied to regional conflicts to test their validity, Nagorno-Karabakh has never been examined by considering all three of these aspects together. Alignment can be understood by referring to literature on alliances. But ethnic identity and its formation should be included in order to analyze how ethnicity shapes the

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10James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (August. 2000): 507, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0304-2421%28200008%2929%3A4%3C507%3APDIHS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z (accessed September 6, 2007).

behavior of conflicting parties in ethnic disputes. Therefore, alignment behaviors in ethnic conflict can best be understood by including both alliance theories and ethnic identity formation.

Literature about the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh generally covers the chronology of conflict. *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War,* by Thomas de Waal,[11] examines the origins of the conflict in chronological order from its early stages up to the date of publication, and he explains how the events evolved rapidly. His interviews with the people from both sides reveal how these events were perceived by Azerbaijanis and Armenians. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implication,* by Michael P. Croissant,[12] again explains the historical background of the conflict with a review of the region's earlier history; he then discusses how the major powers view the conflict and what the interests of surrounding countries are. Neither source applies International Relations theories to the conflict.

Scholars of International Relations have given little attention to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Stuart Kaufman and Svante Cornell are among the few scholars who have tried to analyze the causes of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on theory. Stuart Kaufman argues that ethnic prejudice resulting in a fear of extinction among both ethnic groups generated the conflict.[13] Svante Cornell analyzes the history of the conflict and applies the conflict theory to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem.[14] But, both explanations only explore the origins of this problem. They examine the role of ethnic identity but they do not pay attention to the alignments from an International Relations perspective.

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[11]Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

[12]Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1998).

[13]Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[14]Svante E. Cornell, *Conflict Theory and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Guidelines for a Political Solution?* (Stockholm: Triton, 1997), http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/cornell_pub/nkthrpub.pdf (accessed March 15, 2007).

Realist scholars who focus on alliances in International Relations generally examine theories at the state level of analysis. They focus on states and their relations, and do not investigate the intra-state structure of parties. Current literature in International Relations has devoted little attention to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, most likely due to the complex structure of the region and the conflict.

Contrary to the main balancing theories, it was ethnic politics that drove the initial alignment behaviors in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians are linked to Armenia because of their ethnic kinship. Turkey and Azerbaijan developed mutual relations due to "common ethnic, religious, cultural and historical roots."[15] Abulfez Elcibey, the Azeri President during those early years, preferred to maintain close relations with Turkey due to ethnic ties. A close relationship with Turkey is seen to be a key element in improving relations between Azerbaijan and both the United States and European countries. On the other hand, good relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey shift the balance between the two major regional powers, Iran and Turkey, in Turkey's favor. In addition, Elcibey's irredentist speeches about a potential unification of the Azeri population in Iran with Azerbaijan[16] were perceived as aggressive. Therefore, Azerbaijan was viewed as a threat by Iran. Iran chose to improve its relations with Armenia instead.

From the Russian point of view, the close relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan change the balance of power in the South Caucasus. Therefore, Russia chose Armenia to counter this alignment. The United States, on the other hand, do not want increased Iranian and Russian influence in the region due to increasing American interests and operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, Armenia is excluded from the US-supported pipeline projects. In short, the ethnic affiliations of the conflicting parties stimulated alignments in the early years of the conflict; then, the other external powers tried to balance their adversaries by choosing an ally from the region.

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[15]Akif Maharramzadeh, *"Armenian-Azerbaijan Relations and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Foreign Policy of Turkey," The Journal of Turkish Weekly* (February 14, 2006), http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=1936 (accessed July 25, 2007).

[16]Country Studies, http://countrystudies.us/azerbaijan/36.htm (accessed August 28, 2007).

D.   METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, a comparative case study method will be used to determine the reasons for particular alignments. Both states' alignment policies with external powers will be analyzed and compared. The analysis of alignment will cover a timeline from the beginning of the conflict until the last quarter of 2007. This thesis will start with the regional power alignments (Azerbaijan-Turkey and Armenia-Iran) and then look at the global power alignments (Armenia-Russia and Azerbaijan-America). The major alliance theories will be presented comparatively and then applied to the case to analyze each alignment behavior.

In essence, the main explanation for the alliances is the balancing policies. Each country tries to increase its security in the region and to balance against its opponent. These balancing alignments are the dependent variable, and the independent variable is relative salience of ethnic politics between the states involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and how the sequencing of those alliances shaped the balance of power considerations of the global powers as they chose their allies and adversaries.

E.   ORGANIZATION

In order to analyze how alignments have been formed in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Chapter II will explain basic theories about alliance formation. Then, the literature on ethnicity will be explained in order to understand how ethnic identity can affect states' policies in ethnic conflicts. Chapter III will touch on the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the evolution of the conflict. Both sides have different claims regarding Nagorno-Karabakh. This paper will not try to judge the validity of these claims, but will present them to aid in understanding the background of the region. Chapter IV will analyze the alignment behavior in each alignment pattern. First, the reasons behind the alignment behavior of regional powers, Iran and Turkey, will be examined. The same analysis will then be done for Russia and the United States. Chapter IV will also examine in detail the role of ethnicity and balancing behavior. Chapter V will summarize the findings.

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II. ALIGNMENT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A. THEORY FOR ALIGNMENT

It is necessary to make the distinction between alignment and alliance since the relations between allied states, Azerbaijan-Turkey-U.S. and Armenia-Iran-Russia, can be described as alignments. Both concepts do not have the same meaning in International Relations. Glenn Snyder defines alliances as "… formal associations of states for use (or non-use) of military force, intended for either the security or the aggrandizement of their members, against specific other states, whether or not these others are explicitly identified."[17] While alliances include some level of commitment alignments do not require formal obligations. Snyder defines alignment as

> … a set of mutual expectations between two or more states that they will
> have each other's support in disputes or wars with particular other states.
> Such expectations arise chiefly from perceived common interests; they
> may be strong or weak, depending perhaps on the parties' relative degree
> of conflict with a common adversary.[18]

Since alignments depend on expectations during disputes, members are not required to act together all the time. This freedom gives major powers the opportunity to stay out of major commitments. On the other hand, polarization between two different parties that are aligned against each other will prevent significant gains for each side, which can shift the balance between the groups. Having the support of a major power will increase the negotiation power of a weak state. Thus, weak states will try to bandwagon with a strong power and strong states will want to maintain the balance without making major commitments. However, after violent conflicts occur, alignment behaviors of states may change according to their interests. Alignments may develop into alliances, especially if a rival alignment poses a great threat that will cause a major shift in the

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[17]Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut." *Journal of International Affairs* 44, no. 1 (1990): 104 http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=2&hid=14&sid=f5b3bef0-5a13-48b4-8306-b803685f197b%40sessionmgr7 (accessed June 07, 2007).

[18]Ibid., 105.

balance between opposing alignments. Alternatively, an alignment can disappear if each side no loner perceives the other as a significant threat. In short, alignment will not bring major commitment but will increase the security of weak states.

In December 1991, Armenia signed the membership accord of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was "an accord on military cooperation with Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan."[19] Under the terms of this accord, Russia maintained military bases and equipment in Armenia, and guards Armenia's border with Turkey.[20] Except for these two states, there are no signed defensive contracts between states that are included in this thesis. Therefore, relations among the states mentioned above can be defined as alignments.

Although the relations between states which are related with this conflict should be defined as alignment, literature about the alliances will be used in this thesis. Alliances are examined in detail by many political scientists because, as George Liska claims, "It is impossible to speak of international relations without referring to alliances."[21] The history of the world is full of alliances; many states have joined alliances either to maintain their existence or to keep their superior power. For that reason, alliances are important to the study of International Relations. Many scholars explore why and how these alliances are established, how states look for allies when they feel their security is in danger. While alliance formation draws much attention, the cohesion and dissolution of alliances have great importance in International Relations too. Internal relations among the members, burden sharing or free riding in alliances and many other debates determine the life of an alliance; but the focus in this thesis will be on alliance formation, and on theories that answer 'why, how and with whom to ally' questions.

Julian R Friedman includes the following elements in his discussion of alliances between two or more nation states:

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[19]http://countrystudies.us/armenia/52.htm (accessed July 20, 2007).

[20]Ibid.

[21]George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 2.

  a. pairing or collaboration with one another for a limited duration regarding a mutually perceived problem;
  b. aggregation of their capabilities for participation in international affairs;
  c. pursuit of national interests jointly or by parallel courses of action;
  d. probability that assistance will be rendered by members to one another.[22]

He distinguishes between alliances and other international cooperation experiences, such as "integration, multi-national community building, and economic partnership"[23] by the

  a. existence of an enemy or enemies, actual or anticipated;
  b. contemplation of military engagement and the risk of war;
  c. mutuality of interest in either the preservation of the status quo or aggrandizement in regard to territory, population, strategic resources, and so forth[24]

George Liska stresses the importance of conflicts in alignments, claiming that "conflicts are primary determinants of alignments."[25] If conflicts are very intense, security becomes the state's primary concern. In his argument, conflicts cause polarization and a weak state will try to find support from a strong state when threatened. In this polarization, the strong state will align itself with the weak state, taking on the responsibility for protecting the weak state and its resources from the adversary; the strong state will then be able to exploit the weak state's resources itself. According to Liska's explanation, an alliance is not probable without an adversary, because alliances are "against, and only derivatively for, someone or something."[26] This definition has been broadly debated, especially with regards to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since the collapse of Soviet Union. NATO was established to counter the threat of communism and the Warsaw Pact. NATO is still a functioning organization and continues to expand in membership and area of responsibility in spite of the fact that the

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  [22]Julian R. Friedman, Christopher Bladen, and Steven Rosen, Alliance in International Politics, (Allyn and Bacon, 1970), 5.

  [23]Ibid.

  [24]Ibid.

  [25]George Liska, *Nations in Alliance*, 12.

  [26]Ibid.

communist threat for which it was established no longer exists. Therefore, the idea that alliances must be "against someone or something" is debated among scholars

Security is an important issue for states. When a state faces a threat against its national existence, it will try to enhance its security either by alliance formation or arms acquisition. Both have advantages and disadvantages when costs and benefits are considered. It is the state's responsibility to decide whether it has the resources to deter an enemy by acquiring arms or whether it must sacrifice some of its independence in an alliance with another strong state.[27] Arms acquisition places a heavy burden on national economies. Spending money on weapons instead of common wealth programs is risky especially for democratic states whose voters will care more about direct benefits. But those weapons will then be available whenever the state needs them. On the other hand, an alliance will increase deterrence while sharing the financial burden: but there is always the problem of reliability. Allied states might hesitate to help a threatened state, if doing so costs too much and the benefit is not worth the intervention. Therefore, states will not join alliances if they think that their own power is strong enough and if the cost of joining an alliance is greater than its advantages.[28] Glenn Snyder gives two security-related reasons for alliance formations:

(I)   some states may not be satisfied with only moderate security, and they can increase it substantially by an alliance if others abstain;

(II)   some states, fearing that others will not abstain, will ally in order to avoid isolation or to preclude the partner from allying against them.[29]

All of these explanations answer why states form alliances. There are some common points among these explanations. Generally, a threat is the driving force in

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[27]James D. Morrow, "Arms versus Allies: Trade-offs in the Search for Security," I*nternational Organization* 47, no. 2 (1993): 207, http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=2&hid=7&sid=0c76b9f7-02fd-4597-a410-64c7cc9c06df%40sessionmgr9 (accessed June 16, 2007).

[28] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Knopf., 1972).

[29]Glenn H. Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics," *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 462, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-8871%28198407%2936%3A4%3C461%3ATSDIAP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U (accessed June14, 2007).

alliance formation. If a state perceives a threat and feels that its own strength is not sufficient to deter the threat, it may form an alliance in order to enhance its security In spite of the fact that joining in an alliance restricts freedom of action and brings extra responsibilities, it might become a necessity in the face of a threat especially for minor states.

Another important issue with alliance formation is the selection of allies. How states choose their allies, who allies with whom and in which conditions are the main questions examined by many scholars. In International Relations, there are two main theories which try to answer these questions: Balance of Power and Balance of Threat

1   Balance of Power

When International Relations are considered, the most debated subject is Balance of Power theory. The best case to understand this theory in real life is the history of Europe. Whenever European state leaders such as Hitler and Napoleon tried to make their country the dominant power on the continent or in the world, these leaders faced a coalition against them. Thus, hegemonic power on the continent was always contained.[30] Therefore, many scholars have examined the European history in order to establish a theory to explain how states form alliances and who allies with whom.

The initial theory comes from realist scholars, who view the state as the main actor in international relations (Morgenthau, 1948). Hans J Morgenthau is one of the leading realists in international relation theories. He discusses equilibrium and stability in a state-centric system. According to his argument, stability can be gained by preserving of all elements of the system.[31] If any element of the system increases its power, it can gain dominance over other elements and can even destroy them. Therefore, states will not allow power to be concentrated in the hands of a hegemon. They will reestablish equilibrium by balancing against the hegemon.[32] But this new state of equilibrium might

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[30]Richard Little, *The Balance of Power in International Relations Metaphors, Myths and Models*, (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

[31]Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations,* 181.

[32]Ibid.

be different than the previous one. States in such a competitive system have three choices in order to preserve and expand their relative power: "[t]hey can increase their own power, they can add to their own power the power of other nations, or they can withhold the power of other nations from the adversary."[33] While the first option requires the state to engage in arms acquisition, the other options imply alliance formation.

Other scholars have viewed relations among states as a structure; their theory is based on the system level. Kenneth Waltz is one of the neo-realist scholars. He claims that the system is composed of "actions and interactions of its units"[34]. In this new theory, states are again important factors; they exist in a condition of anarchy and "are unitary actors who, at minimum seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination"[35]. The system in which states try to survive is a self-help system and each unit in this anarchic system tries to increase its own level of protection against the others rather than expanding its own good.[36] If a state acts more effectively and prospers as a result, backward states will feel threatened and will seek to maintain their position in the system. States achieve their purpose in two ways: "internal efforts (moves to increase economic capability, to increase military strength, to develop clever strategies) and external efforts (moves to strengthen and enlarge one's own alliance or to weaken and shrink an opposing one)"[37]. Thus, the system will not allow a hegemonic power to change the positions of units, and secondary states will prefer to stay on the weaker side, since they have a more effective role there due to the need for assistance by other states on this side.[38]

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[33]Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 191.

[34]Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 118.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., 105.

[37]Ibid., 118.

[38]Ibid., 127.

Whether the theory is based on units in the system or the system itself, the Balance of Power theory predicts that balance is always established in states' relations with each other,

> Because units in anarchic systems have an interest in maximizing their long-term odds on survival (security), they will check dangerous concentrations of power (hegemony), by building up their own capabilities (internal balancing), aggregating their capabilities with those of other units in alliances (external balancing), and/or adopting the successful power-generating practices of the prospective hegemon (emulation).[39]

2. Balance of Threat

Stephen Walt brings a new approach to alliance behavior when he examines the question of how states choose their allies. He finds a deficiency in the Balance of Power theory. According to Walt, distribution of capabilities is not the only factor that leaders take into account when making their decision to create an alliance.[40] Despite the fact that power is the major factor in balancing alliances, "states will ally with or against the most *threatening* power."[41] Threat perception was the reason why an alliance formed against expansionist Germany, although the power of the anti-German alliance was already superior to Germany's. In Stephen Walt's theory, alliances are formed by states in order to protect them in times of anarchy. Their existence is the result of threat perception.[42] Thus, alliance is "a response to threat."[43] Threat perception and alliance formation

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[39]William C. Wohlforth, Richard Little, Stuart J. Kaufman, David Kang, et al., "Testing Balance-of-Power Theory in World History." *European Journal of International Relations*, 13, no. 2 (2007), http://ft.csa.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ids70/resolver.php?sessid=09c0ce323970a87070ce3b49688f4e3d&server=www-ca3.csa.com&check=3bd18fc50c0cb3d9d4e678c509baf5ed&db=sagepol-set-c&an=10.1177%2F1354066107076951&mode=pdf&f1=1354-0661%2C13%2C2%2C155%2C2007 (accessed July 29, 2007).

[40]Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (Spring 1988):279, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8183%2819882%2942%3A2%3C275%3ATTOAFT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1 (accessed July 7, 2007).

[41]Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4. (Spring 1985):9, http://links,jstor.org/sici?sici=0162-2889%2819852%299%3A4%3C3%3AAFATBO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K (accessed July 7, 2007).

[42]Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), X.

[43]Ibid., 17.

against a threat are determined by four elements; "aggregate power; proximity; offensive capability; and offensive intentions."[44] All these factors will determine whether a state allies against a threat or with the source of the threat.

a.   Aggregate Power

A state that is concentrating more power might be perceived as a threat by others. This power includes "population, industrial and military capability, technological prowess, etc."[45] A superior country with these elements can project a threatening image since leaders have more incentive to use them against weaker states. The British foreign policy toward Europe before the twentieth century and American policy during World War I to side with the weaker side in order to prevent the emergence of a hegemonic power in the European continent were driven by this notion.[46]

b.   Proximate Power

Closer powers pose a greater threat for states, and proximity to the source of threat shapes alliance decisions. When a weak state is situated very close to a great power, assistance from allies might arrive very late or be denied by the threat of the great power. Therefore, the weak state that is very close to the perceived threat might choose to ally with the source of threat rather than allying against it.[47]

c.   Offensive Power

States with larger offensive power will cause concern in other states. Any state that perceives another's offensive capability as a threat to its own survival will form

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[44]Walt, "Alliance Formation," 9.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid., 10.

an alliance either against or with the threat. Again, if alliance alternatives are not capable of deterring the threat's offensive capability, weak states might side with the offensive power.[48]

d. Offensive Intentions

States projecting an aggressive image can be perceived as a threat and cause an alliance although they might not have extreme power. Although Iran does not have the power to attack American soil, Iran's intention to become a nuclear power is perceived as a threat by the United States. The degree of aggressive intention shapes the alliance policy and more aggressive intentions will cause balancing.[49]

All these theories try to explain alliances from different perspectives. Every new theory tries to fill deficiencies in previous theories. But none of the mentioned theories tries to explore the effects of domestic politics and ethnicity in alliances before or after ethnic conflicts. These conflicts are very common in the world since 82 percent of the independent states have a multiethnic population.[50] What differentiates an ethnic conflict from an ordinary conflict is the identification of conflicting parties. According to Stuart J. Kaufman, a conflict can be defined as ethnic "if the contending actors or parties identify themselves or one another using ethnic criteria."[51] Ethnic identity plays a significant role in each side's behavior. Ethnic elements cause public mobilization in ethnic disputes. Therefore, ethnic conflicts and alliance behaviors of parties can be understood by exploring the relevant domestic structures. Literature on ethnicity and ethnic identity formation can provide insight into what causes people to mobilize against another group and how they try to find an ally.

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[48]Walt, "Alliance Formation," 11.

[49]Ibid., 13.

[50]Monica Duffy Toft, "Indivisible Territory and Ethnic War," in *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests and the Indivisibility of Territory.* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 17.

[51]Stuart J. Kaufman, "Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice? Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence", *International Security,* 30, no. 4 (Spring 2006): 45, http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/international_security/v030/30.4kaufman.pdf (accessed August 8, 2007).

B.   ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND ALIGNMENT BEHAVIOR

1.   Ethnic Identity

Literature dealing with ethnic identity and ethnic conflict offers definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Bruce Gilley defines ethnicity as "a person's identity which is drawn from one or more 'markers' like race, religion, shared history, region, social symbols or language. It is distinct from that part of a person's identity that comes from, say, personal moral doctrine, economic status, civic affiliations or personal history."[52] In Milton J. Esman's definition, ethnic identity "refers to a community that claims common origin, often including common descent or fictive kinship; that possesses distinctive and valued cultural markers in the form of customs, dress, and especially language; and that traces a common history and expects to share a common destiny." [53] Adrian Hasting brings a different approach to the definition of ethnic identity:

> the common culture whereby a group of people share the basics of life–their cloth and clothes; the style of houses; the way they relate to domestic animals and to agricultural land; the essential work which shapes the functioning of a society and how roles are divided between men and women; the way hunting is organized; how murder and robbery are handled; the way defense is organized against threatening intruders; the way property and authority are handed on; the rituals of birth, marriage and death; the customs of courtship; the proverbs, songs, lullabies; shared history and myth; and the beliefs in what follows death and in God, gods or other spirits"[54]

All these definitions include common features such as language, religion, tradition, history, etc. These common features might unite a group under an ethnic identity and differentiate the group from other groups. There are many different languages and other features among people, however, and thus the question remains as to

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[52] Bruce Gilley, "Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 6 (2004): 1158 http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=2&hid=17&sid=581bf627-79e2-4985-aa88-0b9ef5b44243%40sessionmgr7 (accessed August 8, 2007).

[53]Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1994), 15-16.

[54] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 167.

how these features create distinction between groups based on ethnicity. People with completely different background came together and live peacefully in the United States. On the other hand, the people of Yugoslavia shared many commonalities, yet a horrible war resulted from their religious differences. How and when these common features make distinctions between groups is argued by many scholars. There are three main schools about how ethnic identity is formed in a group: primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism.

a.   Primordialism

Scholars who use this approach argue that the common features in a group are acquired at birth. Clifford Geertz argues that

> primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the 'givens' – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed givens – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices.[55]

Given features define the boundaries between groups. Primordialists claim that since these features are given at birth, boundaries set by primordial features cannot be easily changed.[56]

According to the primordial approach, new state formation and modernization cause problems among different groups because the new state is likely to have a multiethnic population. Therefore, unity can be achieved "not by calls to blood and land but by vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological exhortation."[57] "To subordinate these specific and familiar identifications in favor of a

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[55] Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution" in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz, (New York: The Free Press, 1963), 109.

[56] Bernhard Giesen, *Intellectuals and the Nation Collective Identity in a German Axial Age*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 27.

[57] Greetz, "The Integrative Revolution," 110.

generalized commitment to an overarching and somewhat alien civil order is to risk a loss of definition as an autonomous person or, what is even worse, through domination by some other rival ethnic, racial or linguistic community…"[58] For that reason, ethnic conflict is a "natural outlet."[59]

b.   *Instrumentalism*

The instrumental approach claims that having some features from birth does not define a group's identity. Paul R. Brass refers to De Vos' definition of ethnicity as "a sense of ethnic identity that consists of the subjective, symbolic or emblematic use by a group of people...of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from the other groups."[60] Because individuals pursue social, economic and other benefits, the boundaries of groups might change, "depending upon the perceived needs and demands of the group."[61] Therefore, ethnic identity is perceived as an instrument by individuals.

Instrumentalist scholars bring a different approach to the causes of ethnic conflict. According to instrumentalists, ethnic conflicts are the result of competing interests of individuals. Competition among elites has a great effect on the mobilization and manipulation of individuals. Elites concentrate on "differences between groups, such as language, physical appearance, or religion, in order to establish ethnically based political movements aimed at increasing the economic and political well-being of their group or region."[62] Brass claims that conflicts among groups are more common in "modernizing and postindustrial societies undergoing dramatic social change."[63]

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[58]Greetz, "The Integrative Revolution," 109.

[59]Donald Green and Rachel L. Seher, "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" *Annual Review of Political Science,* 6 (June 2003): 521, http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085642 (accessed August 29, 2007).

[60]Paul Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (London: Sage Publications, 1991), 85-86.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Green and Seher, "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" 521.

[63]Brass, "Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation," 19.

c.   *Constructivism*

Some scholars utilize constructivism to explain the formation of ethnic identity. While both instrumentalists and constructivist take a similar position regarding the role of elites, they differ in their approach to identity formation. Constructivist scholars claim that ethnic identities are "socially constructed."[64] M. Crawford Young argues that ethnic identity is not a weapon to defend existence as in primordialism or to gain advantages as in instrumentalism, but is rather "the product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as speech code, cultural practice, ecological adaptation, and political organization become woven into a consciousness of shared identity."[65] Boundaries and the content of an ethnic identity are defined by the group.[66] These boundaries can change through group interactions.

According to constructivist thought, boundaries are imagined and constructed by the group, and external forces affect the identity construction. Even though there might not be different identities in a group, small differences can be exploited to create a distinction. Fearon and Laitin use Croats and Serbs as an example. In the 1800s, both groups were considered South Slavs, but boundaries within this group were created over time.[67] Elites or external powers emphasize differences between groups and they manipulate these differences to mobilize groups. Mobilization of groups by external forces is more general in modernizing, post-colonial and weakening states.[68]

2.   Alignment Behavior in Ethnic Conflicts

The literature about ethnic conflicts shows that power politics have some influence in generating conflicts, but are not sufficient to mobilize people. Mass

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[64]James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 847.

[65]Cited in E. Ike Udogu, "Perspectives on Contemporary Ethnic Conflict,*" Journal of Third World Studies* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 313.

[66]Fearon and Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity," 849.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Green and Seher, "What Role Does Prejudice Play in Ethnic Conflict?" 521.

mobilization focuses on maintaining identity, and keeping the strangers out of a set of imagined boundaries. Elites and outside forces know the vulnerabilities of ethnic groups, and they manipulate these vulnerabilities. Therefore, internal politics have a great effect on the decisions of each party. These   politics can affect the alliance behaviors of parties in ethnic conflicts as well.

Although many scholars fail to include internal politics in their discussion, David R Davis and Will H. Moore's study[69] focuses on whether the existence of the same ethnic groups in different states causes conflicts or cooperation in international relations. Their study analyzes scientific data sets[70] to find evidence for the influence of ethnic composition. They discuss the behavior of an ethnic group whose members are dispersed in different states. In this situation, their theory is based on the following assumptions:

IF

- An ethnic group experiences persecution from state B, or mobilizes and challenges state B's authority/sovereignty, and

- Co-ethnics share power or are dominant in state A, and

- State B falls within the politically relevant international environment (PRIE)[71] (Maoz,1997) of state A

THEN

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[69]David R. Davis and Will H. Moore, "Ethnicity Matters: Transnational Ethnic Alliances and Foreign Policy Behavior," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997).

[70]They use *Conflict and Peace Data Bank [COPDAB],Minorities at Risk, Polity II, Correlates of War (COW) Data,* and *Penn World Tables* projects.

[71]According to Maoz (1997:119), a state's politically relevant international environment (PRIE) is comprised of "the set of political units (state and nonstate units) whose structure, behavior, and policies have a direct impact on the focal state's political and strategic calculus." Cited in Elizabeth H. Prodromou, "Formation of Historical Consciousness Among Greek Adolescents: Some Insights for Political Science Theory", *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 18 (2000), http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/journal_of_modern_greek_studies/v018/18.2prodromou.pdf (accessed August 23, 2007).

- State A will take an interest in the relations between state B and the ethnic group, and will respond to the situation by increasing its hostility toward state B.[72]

Davis and Moore also claim that when an ethnic minority in a state is active and mobilized, a conflict is expected if their ethnic brethren constitute a majority in another state. Davis and Moore define relations between common ethnic groups in different states as "transnational ethnic alliance." Although their study focuses on ethnic groups that constitute a majority in state A and a minority in state B, state B may also try to find ethnic brethren to support it in an ethnic conflict.

Literature about ethnic identity and balancing alliances will aid in understanding alignment behaviors in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Details about the conflict and the behavior of its leaders can make it clearer which motives were effective in determining alignment policies.

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[72]Davis and Moore, "Ethnicity Matters," 173.

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III.   THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

A.   DIFFICULT NATURE OF THE NAGORNO-KARBAKH CONFLICT

The history of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will be analyzed in the following pages, but this analysis is not intended to serve as an arbiter of which party has the right to govern the region. Both Armenians and Azeris emphasize the importance of Nagorno-Karabakh for their national identity, and this claim makes the problem harder to solve. Monica D. Toft argues that, if a specific region has great importance and is "indivisible"[73] for a minority group and a state, it is very unlikely that the ethnic group and the state will find an agreement. In other words, if an ethnic group claims sovereignty over a region, and a state does not permit an acceptable amount of autonomy inside its border, violence is very likely. Such conflicting claims of right to govern the region have forestalled a solution in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Both sides have different claims about the history, and going further back in history makes the conflict even more complicated. Also, claiming the right to govern a region on a historical basis can have a detrimental effect on future conflicts. Fears that the losing side can claim sovereignty over a territory based on historical data may lead the winning side to commit crimes against humanity in an attempt to exterminate the earlier inhabitants. Therefore, sovereignty should be established according to international law. But the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, like many other ethnic conflicts, brings up two major problems in international law: (1) Secession and Self-Determination, and (2) Sovereignty.

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[73] "Indivisibility of territories" is used by Monica Duffy Toft in *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests and the Indivisibility of Territory*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, (2003), 17-20.

1. Secession and Self-Determination

Secession is a form of change in the political status of a territory, aiming at "the break up of a state, typically for the purpose of achieving independent statehood."[74] Self-determination is more complicated since it does not require a new state; instead, people in the country decide their future and the way they will be governed. Both concepts are related to each other and, in some cases, secession might follow self-determination. These concepts are very critical subjects in International Law, and international organizations have not been able to find a solution for this problem.

American leader Woodrow Wilson introduced the concept of self determination after World War I in order to give the right of governance to minorities in multinational states and empires.[75] The right of self-determination is expressed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as follows: "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."[76]

Self-determination is vital in order for minority groups to maintain their culture and characteristics without interruption; the concept was introduced in order to end colonization and to free people from repressive rule. There are many debates about the implementation of self-determination in resolving today's conflicts. It is impossible to find a pure nation-state among today's countries. Many states have ethnic minorities. The majority of multinational states is reluctant to share power with a sovereign entity inside their territories and thus does not want to give autonomy to their minority populations. Svante E. Cornell explains why central governments are reluctant to grant the right of

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[74]William R. Slomanson, *Fundamental Perspectives on International Law* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), 87.

[75]Donald L. Horowitz, "The Cracked Foundation of the Right to Secede," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 2 (2003), http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v014/14.2horowitz.pdf (accessed May 18, 2007).

[76]Bartram S. Brown, "Human Rights, Sovereignty, And The Final Status of Kosovo" *Chicago-Kent Law Review* (2/23/2005): 245, http://lawreview.kentlaw.edu/articles/80-1/Brown%20PDF3.pdf (accessed May 25, 2007).

self-determination.[77]   According to Cornell, the first reason is that granting autonomy might cause the break-up of the state in the long run. Its territorial integrity might be endangered by the new entity. Therefore, the central government might use repressive measures to diminish demands for self-determination, or resort to some human-rights-violating measures. The second reason is a fear that granting autonomy to one group will inspire other minorities. If a group enjoys autonomy, other ethnic groups will try to gain the same, and autonomy of each ethnic group within a state considerably weakens the central government. The third reason, according to Cornell, is the possibility of intervention by third party states. Many states share ethnic groups with their neighbors, who might instrumentalize these groups to gain territory from the adjoining state.

James Crawford argues that unilateral secession "…based on a majority vote of the population of a sub-division or territory"[78] is not recognized internationally except in colonial situation. For that reason, secession is not encouraged in International Law except during decolonization or in extraordinary situations, such as occur when a state has policies that are discriminatory or repressive to minorities, and scholars as much as possible recommend a solution that does not threaten the integrity of a state's territory.

Another argument asks whether secession can bring a solution to conflicts. Donald L. Horowitz claims that, because it is impossible to have a homogenous state, "secession is almost never an answer to such problems and that it is likely to make them worse."[79] It is certain that, in a seceded territory, an ethnic group can make up the majority but it might not form the total population. There will be some citizens from the previous state and there is a possibility of a conflict among ethnic groups. Therefore,

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[77]Svante E. Cornell, "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective," *World Politics* 54 (2002): 245–76, http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/world_politics/v054/54.2cornell.pdf (accessed May 23, 2007).

[78]James Crawford, "State Practice and International Law in Relation to Unilateral Secession," Report to the Government of Canada concerning unilateral secession by Quebec (19 February 1997), http://www.tamilnation.org/selfdetermination/97crawford.htm (accessed May 26, 2007).

[79]Donald L. Horowitz, "The Cracked Foundation of the Right to Secede," *Journal of Democracy* 14, no. 2 (2003): 5, http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v014/14.2horowitz.pdf (accessed May 18, 2007).

there is a question as to what will be the basis for giving minorities the right of secession. Dividing groups into small entities that are incapable of maintaining an existence in economic terms can create problems for regional and global security, as these entities can serve as havens for criminal activities.

2. Sovereignty

Although the increasing number of nongovernmental organizations and groups has reduced the role and power of the sovereign state, states are still the main actors in international relations. Relations between states are regulated by international law, which contains many provisions that protect the sovereignty of the state. Although self-determination is recognized under international laws, territorial integrity is also a basic principle of the United Nations Charter. Regarding sovereignty and self-determination, the United Nation General Assembly has declared that

> [n]othing in the foregoing paragraphs concerning the principle of equal and self-determination of peoples shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.[80]

Every sovereign state has rights over its own territory, and Article 2 of the United Nations Charter forbids states from intervening in other sovereign states' internal affairs.[81]

B. HISTORY OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH

1. Before the Soviet Union

Nagorno-Karabakh is a piece of land in Transcaucasus which historically served as a bridge for traders, travelers, and immigrants and where great empires of history

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[80]U.N General Assembly, Resolution 2625 adopted on October 24, 1970.

[81]Illias Bantekas, "Austria, the European Union and Article 2(7) of the UN Charter," *American Society of International Law, ASIL Insights* (February 2000), http://www.asil.org/insights/insigh40.htm (accessed May 26, 2007).

engaged in battles. Rivalries between big empires had great effects on the people while they were ruled by these empires.[82] A search for evidence from further back in history has created conflicting stories about who ruled the region in earlier centuries. Arguments about the history of the Nagorno-Karabakh region before these great powers arrived make the situation worse, since both sides are supported by different claims. Both Armenians and Azeris look back in the history to find evidences related to their ancestors.

Armenian sources point to the fourth century B.C. claiming that Nagorno-Karabakh was ruled then by the Armenian kingdom.[83] Churches and monuments in particular are shown as proof of the Armenian presence in the region.[84] Since Armenia is a Christian country, these claims might sound reasonable. But the counterargument of Azeri historians is based on Caucasian Albanians (who have no relation with present-day Albania in the Balkans).[85] The location of ancient Albania is similar to Azerbaijan's territory.[86] Ancient Albanians are believed to have been Christian, who then assimilated and converted to Islam following the Arab invasion in the tenth century.[87] According to Azeri claims, the western part of Albania remained Christian and the people there became the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh.[88] Therefore, Azeris assert that the churches and monasteries are remnant of the ancient Albanians.

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[82] Michael P. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 1.

[83] Svante E. Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University, Report no. 46, (1999): 3, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/publications/1999_NK_Book.pdf (accessed March 15, 2007).

[84] Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 153.

[85] Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 7.

[86] "The Caucasian Albanian state emerged in the first half of the first Millennium, and occupied an area between Kartvelia (Georgia) in the West, the Caspian in the east, the Caucasus mountains in the North, and the river Araxes in the South. Caucasian Albania was basically a vassal of Sassanid Persia, and survived until the ninth century AD." Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 4.

[87] De Waal, *Black Garden,* 152.

[88] Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 7.

The history of Nagorno-Karabakh should be examined by analyzing the power competition in Transcaucasus. The arrival of the Seljuk Turks with great numbers affected the structure of the indigenous people. Turk Tribes that settled in Transcaucasus blended with local people. These interactions changed linguistic characteristics in the area and made conversion to Islam easier.[89] Competition between major powers over this region continued. Mongols followed Seljuks. Then Ottomans came to this region in the thirteen century. Safavid Iran became a part of the competition in the sixteenth century. The Ottomans established sovereignty over Transcaucasus at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[90] Russian armies expanding towards the Caucasus brought another rival to the region during the eighteenth century.[91]

The need for an outlet to warm waters directed the Russian attention to the South Caucasus. In addition, adding this region into its territory would secure Russia's south flank from any invasion. Thus, Russia started to manipulate the politics of this region. In order to increase Russian influence and to guarantee local support, they persuaded the local elites to help them advance.[92] Their advances were assisted by the Armenians. "Viewing imperial Russia as 'an advanced civilization and society, a champion of the Christendom against Islam, and the hope for emancipation' most Armenians welcomed the Russian annexation of the area between 1828 and 1878."[93] Thus, Russian imperial advances created early distinctions between the groups, and boundaries started to be shaped among the people for political purposes. When Russia arrived in the region, both the Ottomans and the Iranians were declining in power. Therefore, Russia did not find strong opposition.

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[89]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 4 and Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 7.

[90]Croissant, T*he Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,* 3.

[91]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 4.

[92]Svante E. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus,* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), 32.

[93]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 5-6.

Similarly, the administration of Nagorno-Karabakh changed between Arab, Mongol, Turk and Persian powers during these competitions. Cornell remarks on the autonomous structure during the Safavid Empire and adds that

> [this] arrangement lasted for almost four centuries, and a small number of influential families emerged in Karabakh, leading to conflicts of power among them. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the internal conflicts between the ruling families destroyed the local Armenian elite. This led to the region slipping out of Armenian control, and an Azeri ruler managed to impose his rule and create a semi-independent dynastic rule, the Khanate of Karabakh, based in Shusha. Hence the Karabakh Khanate was comparable to the Khanates of Baku, Kuba, Sheki, Shirvan, Derbent, Nakhjivan, and Yerevan. All of these Khanates were ruled by [Turk] Muslim families. The population components of these Khanates was mixed; in effect Armenians Turks, and other groups lived scattered in the entire area, hence with overlapping settlement patterns. It is significant that the Yerevan Khanate itself was an area with a notable Muslim majority in 1826, a situation which had been reversed already in 1832.[94]

Russian influence over Transcaucasus changed the demographic structure in Nagorno-Karabakh as well. Especially during its confrontations with Iran and Ottomans, Russia tried to transfer the Armenian population from the Ottoman Empire and Iran due to the fact that Russia perceived the Armenians as ally. Thus, the population ratio in Nagorno-Karabakh increased in the Armenians' favor. Russian favoritism towards Armenians led to an increase in the number of Armenians serving in administrative positions, but it did not cause a major problem between Azeris and Armenians until the end of nineteenth century. The first conflict erupted when Russia experienced the revolution of 1905. This problem was quelled after the revolutionary movement ended.[95] Following the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, clashes again started when three states in South Caucasus declared independence. After the end of World War I, Britain assumed responsibility in this region and appointed a Muslim governor in Shusha. Thus Nagorno-Karabakh was perceived as a part of Azerbaijan. But, this situation did not continue for long, and the Soviet Union consolidated its power over the South Caucasus in 1921.[96]

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[94]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 5.

[95]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 11.

[96]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 5-8.

2.   Under Soviet Rule (1921-1988)

The status of Nagorno-Karabakh was a very difficult question for the new administration. The Soviet leadership discussed whether to transfer the administration of Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia or to keep it under Azeri rule. In 1922, a final decision gave the region autonomous Oblast status within the Azerbaijani SSR.[97]

The Soviet Union state structure had four levels of autonomy. Union republics (SSR) were the highest level with parliaments and constitutions. They were legally allowed to secede from the Soviet Union. Autonomous Republics (ASSR) were the second level of administration; they had autonomy and constitutions within union republics. The third level, autonomous oblasts or regions, were under these administrations. Oblasts did not have constitutions, but they did have limited cultural and social autonomy. The last level was the okrugs which had lesser degrees of autonomy.[98]

A federal state structure was not preferred before the Bolshevik Revolution. But the state territory included many nations in a large territory. Stalin had a great influence on the new structure allowing ethnic administrations which would unite under the communist regime. The new federal system was not similar to many other territorial federations. Every unit in the union was based on the ethnic identity of groups in a specific territory. Administration levels represented "ethno-territorial units."[99]

Within these units, ethnic identity was reconstructed by the Bolshevik administration. Every aspect of cultural life was revised by artists, writers, architects and other producers to accommodate these administrative units and their people into the new state form. Indigenous elites were recruited by the central Soviet regime in order to establish the communist administration in these local units. These local elites were

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[97]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, 9.

[98]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 41.

[99]Mark Saroyan, "Beyond the Nation-State: Culture and Ethnic Politics in Soviet Transcaucasia" in *Minorities, Mullahs and Modernity: Reshaping Community in the Former Soviet Union,* ed. Edward W. Walker. (Berkley: University of California Press/University of California International and Area Studies Digital Collection, 1997), 137, http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/research/95/9 (accessed August 26, 2007).

responsible for the establishment of the socialist culture. At the same time, they would maintain basic national features of the groups that they represented. These elites formed the communist cadres that monitored and controlled all the ethnic identity formations and political developments.[100]

These policies illuminate two aspects of ethnic literature. On the one hand, production of new ethnic identities increased the salience of ethnicity, which corresponds with constructivist theory. On the other hand, communist cadres used ethnicity as an instrument. They created a monopoly over the regime and controlled the allocation of the resources. When central power was strong, their policies were supported by Moscow. But when they lacked central support, they immediately exploited ethnic identity to maintain their power.[101]

Under Soviet rule, Nagorno-Karabakh did not experience major clashes until the 1980s. But seeds of the conflict were growing. On the Armenian side, different elements were emphasized in the reconstruction of Armenian identity. After the Stalin era, the events of 1915, when the government of the Ottoman Empire decided to relocate some of the Armenian population from the war zone in eastern Anatolia to areas in the south, became one of the main triggers of Armenian identity formation. An increasing number of publications focused on the eastern part of Turkey. Besides, the literature in Armenia started to include the Armenian population outside the Soviet Armenian republic.[102] The ethnic literature included the Karabakh Armenians as well. A similar reconstruction was seen in Azerbaijan. People in Azerbaijan were focusing on the Azeri population in Iran. Emigrant Azeri poets and writers from Iran became a driving force with their writing longingly of Azeri population in the south.[103] Despite increasing differences between

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[100]Philip G. Roeder, "Liberalization and Ethnic Entrepreneurs in the Soviet Successor States" in *The Myth of "Ethnic Conflict": Politics, Economics, and "Cultural" Violence*, ed Beverly Crawford and Ronnie D. Lipschutz. (Berkeley: University of California Press/University of California International and Area Studies Digital Collection, 1998), 83-84, http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/research/98/4 (accessed August 26, 2007).

[101]Ibid., 85-87.

[102]Saroyan, "Beyond the Nation State," 144-146.

[103]Ibid., 146-148.

ethnic identities, tensions did not escalate to violence between ethnic groups in general, and Armenians and Azeris in particular. An overlapping communist identity was the glue uniting the ethnic groups under the Soviet Union. A common Soviet identity and the oppressive Soviet rule did not allow tensions to rise.[104]

The competition between the two superpowers during the Cold War burdened the Soviet Union, and its economy started to experience stagnation in 1980s. Mikhail S. Gorbachev aimed at a rebuilding of the Soviet state known as *perestroika*. In order to gain support from the public, he introduced *glasnost,* or openness, by which the restructuring would be discussed with the public.[105] The introduction of new policies and the loss of support from the centre motivated local leaders to play the ethnic card.[106] These policies resulted in an unexpected collapse of the communist rule and the rise of local nationalities and identities. As a result, secessionist conflicts erupted, also on the level of autonomous regions.

C.   EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

1.   Increasing Tensions (1988-1991)

Increasing nationalism exacerbated the relations between Armenians and Azeris in the last years of the 1980s. This new condition increased the hope for unification among Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Every public movement was transformed into a political request for unification. Armenians in Chardakli, a village in northwest Azerbaijan, refused an Azeri director; this revealed that it was getting harder to live together peacefully. At the beginning of 1988, an initial flow of refugees from both sides started; these people tried to look for safer places away from their homes.[107]

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[104]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 50.

[105]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 26.

[106]Roeder, "Liberalization and Ethnic Entrepreneurs in the Soviet Successor States," 86.

[107]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 13-14.

The unification desire became a concrete request with a resolution from Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast on 20 February, 1988. This resolution demanded the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijani SSR to Armenian SSR.[108] Following these events, the information flow became unreliable and increased the level of ambiguity. On the last days of February, increasing tensions led to the first trouble in Sumgait, a town near Baku, where some of the refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia were settled. News about two Azeri casualties in Karabakh and the expulsion of the Azeri population from Armenia triggered the events in Sumgait[109] (see the map of Azerbaijan on page 38) The Armenian population in Sumgait faced attacks born out of a desire for revenge.[110] These events could not be controlled until the first of March. There were many claims[111] about how these events erupted, but one certain thing about the unrest is that Soviet forces around the region did not act to end these events.[112] Soviet reluctance to act made the tension irreversible. Armenians in Azerbaijan and Azeris in Armenia felt their lives threatened by ethnic hatred.

In March, 1988, a resolution about the transfer demand was rejected by the USSR Supreme Soviet, the highest decision making institution in the union, due to Article 78 of the Soviet constitution.[113] In June, a resolution which demanded the approval of the resolution about Nagorno-Karabakh's unification request was passed by the Armenian SSR. This resolution was rejected immediately by the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet by

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[108]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, 14.

[109]Adil Baguirov, "Top Five Myths Circulating about the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* (02 April 2006), http://turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=2018 (accessed September 23, 2007).

[110]During the unrest of 27-29 February, the official death toll shows 32 dead, 26 of which are Armenians. Armenian sources claim that the number was greater than official figures. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 83; De Waal, *Black Garden*, 4.

[111]De Waal, *Black Garden,* 41-44.

[112]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 19, Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 29, De Waal, *Black Garden,* 37-40.

[113]According to Article 78 of the Soviet Constitution, "The Territory of a union republic may not be altered without its consent. The boundaries between republics may be altered by mutual agreement of the union republics concerned, subject to confirmation by the USSR," Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,* 28.

referring to the Soviet constitution. In July, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR reaffirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijani SSR by rejecting the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians' unilateral vote for secession from Azerbaijan.[114] Armenians became suspicious about Moscow's stand. During the political disputes, the refugee flow continued with great numbers on both sides.

Figure 3.   Map of Azerbaijan[115]

On 7 December, Armenia experienced an earthquake, and the Soviet leadership saw this disaster as an opportunity to take control of events. Eleven members of the Nagorno-Karabakh Committee were arrested on charges of obstructing earthquake

[114]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 19-20; Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 29-30.

[115]Map of Azerbaijan http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/images/azerbaijan-map-l.gif (accessed September 28, 2007).

relief.[116] On 12 January, 1989, Moscow imposed a "special government administration". Thus, Moscow would be responsible for the control of Nagorno-Karabakh, but Nagorno-Karabakh would remain within Azerbaijan's borders. After Moscow released members of the Nagorno-Karabakh Committee, the Armenian leaders developed a movement called the Armenian National Movement (ANM), with Levon Ter-Petrosyan as its first leader. Moscow's decision to take the control of Nagorno-Karabakh was perceived as a loss of sovereignty by Azerbaijan. Moscow started to lose its credibility in Azerbaijan, too, and Azeris formed a movement, called the Azerbaijani Popular Front (APF), to set goals and policies about the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. Abulfez Elcibey was elected chairman of the AFP.[117] Both Ter-Petrosyan and Elcibey were anti-Communist leaders and products of the nationalist movements in their respective republics.[118]

In July, 1989, Armenia imposed an embargo on Nakhichevan, a separated autonomous enclave of Azerbaijan near the border of Turkey (see the map of Azerbaijan on page 38). APF retaliated by starting an embargo against Armenia.[119] Due to increasing tensions and pressure, Moscow decided to abolish its control over Nagorno-Karabakh and restored Azerbaijani rule on 28 November.[120] Following that, the Armenian Supreme Soviet and the National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh proclaimed a "United Armenian Republic" which included both Armenian SSR and Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan SSR denounced the declaration. Development projects concerning Nagorno-Karabakh were discussed in a unified Armenian budget during a joint session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet and Nagorno-Karabakh.[121] Azerbaijani SSR perceived this discussion as interference in its internal affairs and condemned this act.[122]

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[116]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 32.

[117]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 86-89.

[118]Ibid., 93.

[119]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 23.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 34-38.

[122]*Baku Domestic Service,* 10 January 1990, in FBIS-SOV, #90-008 (11 January 1990): 86-87 cited in Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,* 36.

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union rejected the Armenian budgetary act with a resolution but it did not take any concrete steps. In January 1990, AFP formed groups to protest the inactivity of Azerbaijan's communist government and Moscow. These protests turned into violence, but the Soviet military force again did not intervene to stop the riots. It allowed chaos to justify the Soviet takeover of Baku in the following days. In order to prevent the APF from coming to power, Soviet troops were sent into Baku to enforce martial law. This use of force and brutal suppression resulted in more than a hundred casualties.[123] These events were declared a national mourning day in Azerbaijan, to be remembered as "Black January" from then on; they gave Moscow an extremely negative image among Azeris.[124] After the military intervention, Azerbaijan's communist party leadership was replaced by Moscow and Ayaz Muttalibov became the new party secretary.

In February, the Baltic republics arranged a meeting to bring the leaders of the APF and the ANM together in Riga. Thus, two driving groups from both republics came together to discuss the future of Nagorno-Karabakh. But the meeting did not bring any solution to the disputes. While the Armenians defended self-determination, the Azeris emphasized the principle of territorial integrity.[125] This meeting gave a clue about future negotiations.

In order to prevent a similar Soviet military invasion, Armenia started to form militias known as the Armenian National Army (ANA) and tried to acquire arms. In August, 1990, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, the anti-communist leader of the Armenian National Movement (ANM), was elected to the chairmanship of the Armenian SSR; he declared Armenia's goal to become an independent republic that would include Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia was not the only republic requesting secession from the Soviet

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[123]"Azerbaijan Mourns Black January Martyrs," Today.Az, (January 20, 2007), http://www.today.az/news/politics/35200.html (accessed September 24, 2007).

[124]Audrey L. Altstadt, *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and Identity Under Russian Rule* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1992), 220.

[125]Svante E. Cornell, "Undeclared War: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Reconsidered," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,* XX, no. IV (Summer 1997): 8, http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/cornell_pub/main_doc.pdf (accessed August 26, 2007).

Union. Towards the end of 1990, a treaty that offered broader autonomy to the republics was disclosed. This treaty became a new Union treaty through a referendum in March, 1991.[126]

The Azerbaijani communist government, headed by Mutalibov, hoped for the revival of the Soviet Union with the new treaty. Meanwhile, Armenia was preparing its own forces and capabilities to secede from the Soviet Union. During the first months of the 1991, sporadic clashes occurred in northern Nagorno-Karabakh. Due to the increasing secession demand and the Armenian militias' activities, Moscow began "Operation Ring" on 30 April 1991 along with forces of Azerbaijan to disarm the paramilitary groups in Armenian villages.[127] The result of this operation was not as expected. It neither stopped the clashes nor ended the secession demand in Armenia. Furthermore, Nagorno-Karabakh became more estranged from Azerbaijan.[128]

In August 1991, an attempted coup by the Communist Party and KGB failed to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev. Following the coup attempt, the Soviet Union began the process of breaking apart: and two republics, Azerbaijan and Armenia, were left alone to solve the problem despite the presence of the Soviet military, which was in confusion about its role.[129] In that power vacuum, Azerbaijan declared independence on 30 August 1991 and Mutalibov was elected Azerbaijan's president. Immediately afterwards, Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence by asserting a "right to secede" in Soviet law[130] despite the fact that the Soviet constitution did not allow secession for oblasts. Armenia's independence followed a September referendum, and Levon Ter-Petrosian was elected president. After the independence of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the nature of the conflict changed. In the international arena, Nagorno-Karabakh was recognized as a part of Azerbaijan, and Armenia's involvement in the conflict would be considered as

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[126]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 39-40.

[127]"Armenia and Azerbaijan; Taking Sides," *The Economist* (May 18, 1991).

[128]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 42.

[129]Ibid., 43.

[130]De Waal, *Black Garden,* 160-161.

interference with Azerbaijan's sovereignty.[131] Therefore, Armenia's intention to unite with Nagorno-Karabakh was abandoned, since such a move would have caused pressure from international organizations.

2.   The War (1992-1994)

Even the Union treaty could not save the Soviet Union. On December 8, 1991, leaders of the three Slavic republics, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, announced the demise of the Soviet Union and proclaimed a new "Commonwealth of Independent States" (CIS)[132] Once again, as in the revolutions in 1905 and 1917, a major change in Moscow brought two nations into conflict. The main restraining actor disappeared, and remnants of the Soviet military were looted by both sides in preparation for a military solution. Armenia was better prepared for independence, while Azerbaijan's communist government was dependent on Moscow. Therefore, the power vacuum became an opportunity for Armenia's offensive operations.

In the beginning of 1992, Armenia captured the villages of Malybeili, Karadagly, and Agdahan in Azerbaijan. Then the strategically important town Khojaly, home to the region's main airport, was seized with the support of the 366th CIS (formerly Soviet) regiment.[133] Although the massacres in Khojaly[134] have not drawn much attention in general, the comments of Serzh Sarkisian, an Armenian military leader, indicate a

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[131]De Waal, *Black Garden,* 160-161.

[132]Serge Schmemann, "Declaring Death of Soviet Union, Russia And Two Republics Form New Commonwealth," *The New York Times,* 9 December 1991, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE0DE153CF93AA35751C1A967958260 (accessed September 9, 2007).

[133]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 31.

[134]Aytan Gahramanova says, "613 Azerbaijani civilians from the Karabakh city of Khojaly were massacred while escaping from the city on February 26, 1992 by Armenian forces," Aytan Gahramanova "Peace Strategies in "Frozen" Ethno-Territorial Conflicts: Integrating Reconciliation into Conflict Management: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh" Arbeitspapiere – Working Papers Nr. 103, (Universitat Mannheim, 2007). http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/publications/wp/wp-103.pdf (accessed September 30, 2007) She citesThomas Goltz, "A Decade of Useless War Remembered. Azerbaijan" *International Magazine* (Spring 2002).

"deliberate act of mass killing."[135] Shocked by the massacre of civilians, Azeris demanded action from the administration by popular demonstrations outside the Azerbaijani parliament. Under popular pressure, President Mutalibov resigned and the Azerbaijani parliament selected Yakub Mamedov as the leader of Azerbaijan until elections were held.[136] In the spring of 1992, Iran started a mediation effort by arranging meetings with representatives from Baku and Yerevan. But hostility between the two parties prevented any solution.[137]

Figure 4.   The Nagorno-Karabakh Region[138]

In order to create a secure corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian forces focused on Shusha and Lachin (see the map of the Nagorno-Karabakh).

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[135]Serzh Sarkisian said "But I think the main point is something different. Before Khojali, the Azerbaijanis thought that they were joking with us, they thought that the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that [stereotype]. And that's what happened." Cited in De Waal, *Black Garden,* 172.

[136]Francis X Clines, "Angry Azerbaijanis Impel Chief to Quit," *The New York Times,* 7 March 1992 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CE7D71238F934A35750C0A964958260   (accessed September 7, 2007).

[137]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 79.

[138]Carol Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," *Congressional Research Service*, (Updated August 8, 2003): CRS-4 http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/ib92109.pdf (accessed May 14, 2007).

While Azerbaijan was in internal turmoil, these towns were conquered by Armenian forces in May.[139] Thus, after the budgetary cord, a physical linkage was established between brethren.

Azerbaijan's elections were held in June, and Abulfez Elcibey, who had accused Iran of supporting Armenia during the conflict, was elected president. His intention was to create an independent state with its own army and money. Therefore, he wanted to keep Azerbaijan out of the CIS.[140] Besides, he dreamed of creating "Greater Azerbaijan" by uniting "Northern" and "Southern" Azerbaijan.[141] Thus, his ideas distanced Azerbaijan from Russia and Iran. The new administration changed the atmosphere in Azerbaijan. Shortly after the election, Azerbaijani forces conducted counterattacks from the northeast of Nagorno-Karabakh.[142] Agdere/Mardakert and Shaumia were recaptured from the Armenians. After these initial successes, Azerbaijani forces focused on the Shusha and Lachin corridor which was the logistic link between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Azeri attacks in September were countered by Armenian forces in October.[143] Thus, successful Azeri attacks in June were stopped by Armenian forces after the first shock.

After the conflict intensified, Russia and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)[144] intervened to promote a dialogue between the parties in order to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. The Minsk Group was formed with

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[139]Svante E. Cornell, *Conflict Theory and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Guidelines for a Political Solution?* (Stockholm: Triton, 1997), 9, http://www.pcr.uu.se/publications/cornell_pub/nkthrpub.pdf (accessed March 15, 2007).

[140]"Nationalist Elected President in Azerbaijan," *The New York Times,* 9 June 1992 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CE3DD1539F93AA35755C0A964958260 (accessed September 13, 2007).

[141]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 83.

[142]"Azerbaijan Retakes Region from Armenians," *The New York Times,* 16 June 1992 http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CE7DD1E3CF935A25755C0A964958260 (accessed September 13, 2007).

[143]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 84.

[144]Since 1995, the CSCE has been called The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

nine delegates from the CSCE members together with Azerbaijani and Armenian delegates. The Minsk Group was to hold a conference to provide a settlement for the crisis according to CSCE principles.[145] Due to discord[146] between the Armenian and Azerbaijani delegates, this conference was canceled.

After the failure of the peace conference, Armenian forces recaptured Agdere/Mardakert, on the north of Karabakh, in February 1993. Then Kelbajar, on the northwest of Karabakh, was captured in April.[147] A simultaneous offensive started in Fuzuli, a district capital on the southeast near Iran's border. After events deteriorated, the Turkish administration announced an embargo on aid to Armenia due to increasing domestic pressure. President Elcibey declared a state of emergency in Azerbaijan.[148]

As the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan increased, greater international attention was focused on the conflict. On April 30, 1993, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed Resolution 822, which demanded "immediate cessation of all hostilities and hostile acts with a view to establishing a durable cease-fire, as well as immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces from the Kelbadjar district and other recently occupied areas of Azerbaijan."[149] Azerbaijan greeted the resolution favorably because it talked of occupation. Since the resolution did not mention it directly, Armenia

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[145]Belarus, Germany, Italy, Russia, U.S., Turkey, France, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. After Czechoslovakia was split up, the number of participating states became twelve including Azerbaijan and Armenia. "Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace," *International Crisis Group*, Europe Report 167, (11 October 2005): 9. http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=3740 (accessed May 15, 2007).

[146]The Armenian side insisted on inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians but Azerbaijani side rejected inclusion which would mean recognition of an entity. Another issue was the future status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian side insisted on a cease-fire and then deployment of peace keeping forces. This would mean a diminishing of Azerbaijani sovereignty. Therefore, Azerbaijani delegates requested the status of Nagorno-Karabakh be defined first. Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*, 84.

[147]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 97.

[148]"Turks Side with Azerbaijan as Armenia Tightens its Grip," *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), April 5, 1993, http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2501409394&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2501409397&cisb=22_T2501409396&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=314239&docNo=3 (accessed September 13, 2007).

[149]UN Security Council Resolution 822, http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/247/71/IMG/N9324771.pdf?OpenElement (accessed August 26, 2007).

welcomed the resolution as well. The UN resolution urged all parties to resume the negotiations within the Minsk Group framework. In May, the parties agreed to a peace plan negotiated by Russia, the United States and Turkey.[150]

This plan did not bring an end to the conflict due to internal turmoil in Azerbaijan. Military defeats in many parts of Azerbaijan had drained Elcibey's credit and authority. Colonel Surat Husseinov from Azerbaijani army did not obey Baku's orders demanding his return to the front. Instead, he marched with his forces to Baku to force Elcibey to step down. Azerbaijani forces did not fight against Husseinov's men. In June 1993, Elcibey agreed to hand over his office to Heydar Aliyev, who served as head of the Azerbaijani KGB and was ruling Nakhichevan. During this chaotic period, Nagorno-Karabakh Armenian forces captured Agdam to the east of Nagorno-Karabakh's center, on June 23. They proceeded towards the south and seized Fizuli and Jebrail, near Iran's border, a month after Agdam's capture.[151] Increasing concern over the Armenian advances brought criticism from neighboring countries, Turkey, Iran and Russia. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 853, expressing concern over the deteriorating relations between the two republics, calling for an immediate ceasefire, and reaffirming Azerbaijan's sovereignty.[152]

In October, the Armenians captured Goradiz, a town southeast of Fizuli. This success cut the link between Zangilan, a region in southwest Azerbaijan, and the rest of Azerbaijan.[153] Armenian advances towards the south threatened the passage of Azeri refugees in the remaining part of the southwest Azerbaijan, and Iran became the only safe place to flee. Therefore, Iran alerted its forces to prevent the Armenian blockade in the south of Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkey was also concerned about the great number of

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[150]"Armenia and Azerbaijan Agree on a Peace Plan" *The New York Times,* May 27, 1993, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE0DD103CF934A15756C0A965958260 (accessed September 26, 2007).

[151]De Waal, *Black Garden,* 215.

[152]UN Security Council Resolution 853 http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/428/34/IMG/N9342834.pdf?OpenElement (accessed September 26, 2007).

[153]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 40.

refugees after the Armenian advances. But Russia did not want any intervention in the post-Soviet states. On October 14, the UN Security Council passed a similar resolution urging regional states not to intervene in the conflict.[154] Towards the end of October, Zangilian was taken by Armenian forces and the Azeri population between Fuzuli and Zangilan was evicted. Resolution 884, which repeated the calls of previous resolutions, was adopted by the UN Security Council on 12 November 1993.[155]

Heydar Aliyev consolidated his power by restoring order in the military and developing better relations with other countries. Just before the beginning of 1994, Azerbaijani forces started an offensive on many fronts and gained some territory around Fizuli, Kelbajar and Agdere/Mardakert regions. But Azeri advances stalled in February. After the April offensive, the Armenians regained some areas around Agdere/Mardakert.[156] On 12 May, the warring parties attended a talk arranged by a joint mediation effort of Russia and the CSCE, and they signed a cease-fire agreement in Moscow.[157]

3.   Frozen Period (1994-)

Armenian forces won a decisive victory at the end, but the consequences were terrible for humanity. Approximately 300,000 Armenians and 700,000 Azeris had to leave their homes during the conflict.[158] Seven Azeri districts around Nagorno-Karabakh

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[154]UN Security Council Resolution 874
http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/557/41/PDF/N9355741.pdf?OpenElement (accessed September 26, 2007).

[155]UN Security Council Resolution 882
http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/631/20/PDF/N9363120.pdf?OpenElement (accessed September 26, 2007).

[156]Cornell, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict,* 40-41.

[157]" New Karabakh Cease-fire Agreement Reached," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts,* (May 13, 1994),
http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2509627466&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=426&resultsUrlKey=29_T2509625124&cisb=22_T2509628607&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=444 (accessed September 26, 2007).

[158]Aytan Gahramanova, "Identity Conflict and Its Implications for Conflict Management," UNISCI Discussion Papers 11, (Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation, May 2006): 158, http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?v21=101266&lng=en&id=19510 (accessed August 26, 2007).

were taken by Armenian forces. The cease-fire agreement brought an end to the major conflict, but violations with casualties continued on both sides.
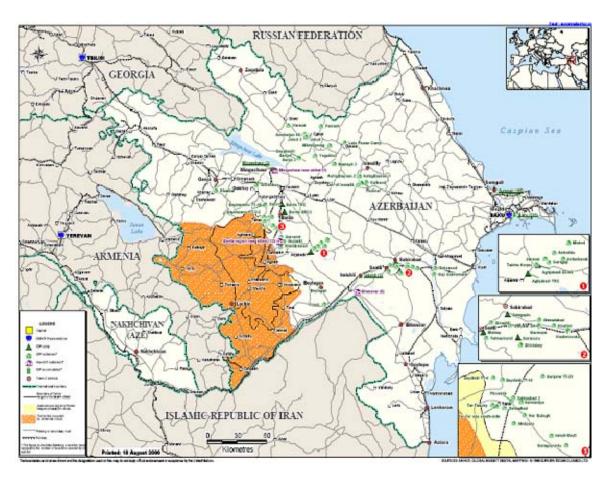

Figure 5.   Azerbaijan as of 2006[159]

Mediation efforts continued to seek a peace settlement. The Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States, conducted the main mediation effort in the OSCE. In December 1996, the Minsk group arranged a summit in Lisbon and recommended three principles for the peace settlement: the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia, the highest degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan, and

[159]Source: Azerbaijan as of 2006, UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency, http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/44103bcb0.pdf (accessed September 14, 2007).

guaranteed security for Nagorno-Karabakh. Only Armenia voted against the resolution by claiming that the resolution predetermined the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.[160]

Armenia was losing support from other countries and became isolated. Meanwhile, Aliyev improved Azerbaijan's relations with major countries by negotiating oil resources. A new peace proposal was declared in May 1997. Azerbaijan accepted the proposal, and Armenia expressed "serious reservation," but Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians rejected the proposal in August. The OSCE suggested a "step-by-step"[161] plan in September. Fearing isolation, Armenian President Ter-Petosyan accepted the plan as a basis for negotiation and mentioned the necessity of compromise.[162] His appeasement drew serious criticism from powerful figures in the Armenian administration including Robert Kocaryan, who had recently been elected Armenia's prime minister. Due to harsh criticism, Ter-Petrosyan resigned in February, 1998, and Kocaryan was elected president in March. Coming from Nagorno-Karabakh, Kocaryan is unlikely to favor a compromise.

The "common state"[163] plan was presented in November, 1998. Azerbaijan did not accept since the plan would create horizontal relations. Between 1999 and 2001, both presidents met in Washington, Geneva and the Sadarak district on the Armenia-Nakhichevan border. For both Aliyev and Kocaryan, any compromise would threaten their legitimacy in their republics. Therefore, these meetings did not bring any different solution to the conflict. The two leaders were brought together in Key West, Florida, in

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[160]"Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace," *International Crisis Group*, 8-9.

[161]Two different methods were introduced by OSCE. The step-by-step method included political agreement followed by determination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The package method guaranteed the security of Nagorno-Karabakh followed by withdrawal of troops from occupied territories.

[162]"Nagorno-Karabakh: Timeline of The Long Road To Peace," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/02/908366e9-f535-4958-9383-09f351a1ef0c.html (accessed August 13, 2007).

[163]"Under the plan, Karabakh would form a loose confederation with Azerbaijan, have internationally recognized status as a republic, a constitution, "national guard" and police, and power to veto Azerbaijani laws that contradict Karabakh's. Azeri refugees would have the right of return to Shusha in Karabakh and Armenian refugees to Shaumyan. Armenia's armed forces would return home. Those of Karabakh would withdraw from areas around Karabakh, which would become an unpopulated, demilitarized buffer zone controlled by a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force. The United States, France, and Russia would guarantee the settlement." Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," CRS-6.

April 2001, but this summit did not conclude any concrete solution for the problem. Following that, several other meetings have failed to reach an agreement about disputes, even after Ilham Aliyev, Heydar Aliyev's son, became the president in Azerbaijan.

Although the UN Security Council passed four resolutions condemning the occupation of Azeri territories, it did not seek compliance with the resolutions. Therefore, the Azeri administration has criticized the UN's inactivity. The resolutions did not name Armenia directly as an occupying party, but the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution in which Armenia was criticized for occupation of Azeri territories and for ethnic cleansing.[164] However, this resolution did not require any sanctions. Still, after thirteen years, no solution is agreed to by both Armenians and Azeris.

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[164]"Nagorno-Karabakh: Timeline Of The Long Road To Peace," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/02/908366e9-f535-4958-9383-09f351a1ef0c.html (accessed August 13, 2007).

IV.   ANALYSIS OF ALIGNMENTS

Despite its small size, the South Caucasus exhibits a strong concentration of diverse ethnic groups with considerable ethnic intermingling. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and emerging conflicts between these ethnic groups were a surprise for the regional and major powers. The Soviet Union finally collapsed in 1991; however, its influence was effective in the region even after its collapse. Therefore, external actors could not establish a firm policy towards this region after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Small players in ethnic conflicts tried to increase their security and major powers tried to secure their interest by alignment. An initial alignment was formed between Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and Armenia. As David R Davis and Will H. Moore said[165], an ethnic group divided by a border strives for close relations. Especially, if the smaller part of the group constitutes a minority in one country and challenges the authority in that country, their ethnic brethren which constitute a majority in another country will focus their attention on the minority group. Because strong bonds of shared identity tie these groups, a majority group will feel obliged to support its brethren, and a "transnational ethnic alliance" is a natural consequence. In the case of Karabakh, Armenia indeed went so far as to openly support the irredentist intentions and unification request of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians.[166] Armenia's involvement changed the nature of the conflict, and an internal problem became an international conflict. External actors became interested in the events and defined their own positions.

The attention of external actors to this region increased in the course of time due to the South Caucasus region's significant position. The South Caucasus is very close to the energy resources in the Caspian Basin, and it serves as a corridor for the transfer of

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[165]Davis and Moore, "Ethnicity Matters."

Caspian and Asian resources to the West. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is located at the center of this corridor. These resources caused a competition between major powers and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict shaped the alignment decisions of external powers. In addition to energy resources, security has become a major concern after the September 11 attacks. Ethnic conflicts that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union threaten the stability of the region, and frozen conflicts impede the development of democratic institutions. Due to the competition between external actors, these conflicts have not been resolved yet. Unless these conflicts are resolved, there will be fundamental instability in the region; as a result, this region can be a safe haven for illegal organizations, drug and human trafficking, extremist movements and uncontrolled arms building.

A.   REGIONAL POWER ALIGNMENTS

1.   Azerbaijan-Turkey

During the Cold War, Turkey was the Western ally farthest to the east. Turkey was physically close to the Soviet Union, thus was forced to be oriented toward the West. To increase security, Turkey increased its relations with the West. As a result, Turkey was accepted as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Thus, it became a member of the West's military alliance; however, its application for full membership in the European Union was rejected. Therefore, the demise of the Soviet Union offered a great opportunity for Turkey to diversify its foreign relations with alternatives from the east. Turkey turned its attention towards new states which shared a common language, history and religious ties.

The South Caucasus is located in the middle of Turkey's connection with Central Asia. For that reason, Turkey tried to establish stable relations with Armenia and

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166 "A Helsinki Watch report found evidence, especially after December 1993, pointing to involvement of Armenia's military. Karabakh officials participate in sessions of Armenia's Security Council and Armenia's Foreign Ministry assists their foreign travels and contacts. Armenia furnishes military advisers, arms (including an anti-aircraft system), food and supplies, and funds to Karabakh." Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," CRS-9.

Georgia.[167] Without prejudgment, Turkey was the first country to recognize Armenia's independence, even before the United States,[168] and start normal relations. Due to linguistic, historic and religious ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan, close relations between the two was a natural consequence after Azerbaijan declared independence. Leaders from both sides emphasized the ethnic ties between Turkey and Azerbaijan. In an interview, Elcibey expressed his view about the relations between the two countries by saying "[o]ur people are close in language, culture and mentality. Of course, Turkey will enjoy pride of place in Azerbaijan's foreign policy."[169] In another interview, Elcibey underlined the similarities between the two countries and said "We are like Turkey. We are between Europe and Asia. We are striving for a secular society, but the Islamic factor is also present here."[170]

Although Turkey's relations with this region were originally neutral, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict affected Turkish policy. This conflict was an internal affair of Azerbaijan, so Armenian involvement[171] displeased Turkey, and relations started to get chilly with Armenia. The Khojaly massacres in particular were a turning point for Turkish policy. Public pressure forced the Turkish government to act on behalf of Azerbaijan. In May 1992, Suleyman Demirel, prime minister of Turkey at that time, brought the ethnicity to the front and remarked about Turkey's support: "[t]oday the blood of our brothers flows in Karabakh and [Azeris] should know that Turkey stands

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[167]Scott A Jones, "Turkish Strategic Interests in the South Caucasus," in *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, ed. Gary K. Bertsch, et al. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 57.

[168]Hasan Kanbolat, "Ermenistan'ın Türkiye ile Sorunu Nedir, Sınır Kapısı Açılmalı mıdır?" *Avrasya Stratejik Araştirmalar Merkezi-Eurasian Strategic Research Center* http://www.asam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.asp?ID=1799&kat1=1&kat2 (accessed November 1, 2007).

[169] Michael B Bishku, "Turkey, Ethnicity, and Oil in the Caucasus," *Journal of Third World Studies* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2001):15, http://www.proquest.com/ (accessed November 23, 2007).

[170] Ibid.

[171]The Republic of Armenia began sending conscripts and regular Army and Interior Ministry troops to fight in Karabakh; "Armenia," Human Rights Developments, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/HELSINKI-01.htm (accessed November 1, 2007).

behind [Azerbaijan] and will never abandon [Azerbaijan]"[172] As a response to Armenian involvement in advances and the Khojaly massacres, Turkey closed its border to Armenia in 1993 and its airspace in 1994.[173]

Turkey intended to become the leader in the Turkish speaking states[174] in Asia. It would be a bridging example with secular and democratic institutions and a Muslim population. However, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict became a critical test for Turkey. Armenian military advances disturbed Turkey. Inactivity against Armenian advances would damage its prestige as a leader of the Turkish speaking states. On the other hand, unilateral military intervention would ruin its relations with the West. Turkey's past experience in Cyprus was not forgotten.[175] For that reason, Turkey could not intervene, but joined Azerbaijan's embargo by terminating its relations with Armenia; thus, it had an enormous negative effect on Armenia's war effort.

Armenia's territorial rhetoric about the eastern part of Turkey also increased tension between Turkey and Armenia. Increasingly, literature in Armenia focuses on eastern Turkey and includes territorial claims. These claims are based on the Sevres Treaty,[176] which would allow the establishment of an Armenian state in this region.[177] The new Turkish Republic did not sign this treaty, and the new Turkish territories were

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[172] Bishku, "Turkey, Ethnicity, and Oil in the Caucasus," 15.

[173] Kanbolat, "Ermenistan'ın Türkiye ile Sorunu Nedir, Sınır Kapısı Açılmalı mıdır?"

[174] Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

[175] Turkey conducted a military operation based on Cyprus's constitution, which defined Britain, Greece and Turkey as guarantor states, after a military coup that declared its intention to realize *enosis*: unification with Greece. The operation was condemned and Turkey was isolated. Muzaffer Yilmaz, "The Cyprus Conflict and the Question of Identity," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly,* (March 14, 2006) http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=108 (accessed October 28, 2007).

[176] David B. Boyajian, "The Armenian Land Question—Misunderstood Terrain," *Armenian Weekly Online,* (August , 2004) http://www.hairenik.com/armenianweekly/august_2004/politics001.html (accessed November 1, 2007).

[177] The Sevres Treaty would have defined the future of the Ottoman Empire and its territories. This treaty was never signed or certified by Vahdettin, the sultan of the Ottoman Empire of that era. Ata Atun, "Barzani, the PKK and the Sèvres Peace Treaty," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, (November 7, 2007) http://www.turkishweekly.net/news.php?id=50011 (accessed November 14, 2007)

defined in the Lausanne Treaty on July 24, 1923.[178] In addition, Turkey's eastern borders were defined in the 1920 Gumru and 1921 Kars treaties.

Turkey and Armenia have not been able to solve their disputes about the events of 1915. It would be better to bring the two sides together to discuss their arguments about these events. In fact, Turkey invited the Armenian side to share their archives for discussion.[179] However, no progress between the two countries has been achieved so far. Instead, the large Armenian diaspora is putting pressure on Western governments to pass laws in conformity with Armenian claims. These efforts exacerbate relations between the two countries. As a result of the unresolved disputes between Turkey and Armenia, Armenia perceives Turkey as its main antagonist, and vice versa Turkey perceives Armenia as a threat, and is not willing to increase relations with it. Turkey-Azerbaijan relations function as a balancing alignment against Armenia.

From the Azerbaijani point of view, Iran and Turkey share common characteristics with Azerbaijan and they both would be plausible allies during the conflict. However, the two countries represented two different blocks of the Cold War. Iran was reluctant to cooperate with the West, and therefore was isolated from the Western alliance. Due to the West's success at the end of the Cold War, being in the Western block was more attractive for Azerbaijan, which preferred a secular state rather than an Islamic one. Turkey would be a model for developing its institutions to make them compatible with Western values. Due to the large Armenian population in the United States and Europe, Armenia did not have any difficulty in attracting Western attention and conveying Armenian claims. Therefore, Azerbaijan was pretty much isolated at the beginning of the conflict. Turkey would be able to use its diplomatic relations with Western countries to counter the Armenian influence and to increase

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[178]Philip Marshall Brown, "From Sevres to Lausanne," *The American Journal of International Law* 18, no. 1 (1924): 113-116, http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9300%28192401%2918%3A1%3C113%3AFSTL%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y (accessed November 2, 2007).

[179]"The government of Turkey has opened its archives for more research and has supported further examination," Bruce Fein, "Tawdry Genocide Tale," *The Washington Post Times* (September 2, 2007), http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070902/COMMENTARY02/109020014/1012 (accessed October 2, 2007).

Azerbaijan's negotiation power. Iran's chilly relations with the West would not help Azerbaijan's claims. As a result of Iran's chilly relations, mediation responsibility was given to the CSCE, which did not include Iran.

Close relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey affect policies in the South Caucasus. Azerbaijan prefers Turkey to introduce its energy resources to the Western countries. Due to the need for diversification of energy supplies, Western countries had to cooperate with Azerbaijan and Turkey to reduce the Russian hegemony on the energy market. Western countries supported Baku-approved energy transfer routes. Thus, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline projects, which transfer oil and gas resources from the Caspian Basin, have become a fundamental source of supply for European energy demands. These energy projects, together with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, increased cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, and isolated Armenia in the region.

2.   Armenia-Iran

Iran has been one of the major actors in the politics of the South Caucasus. In Caucasus history, it had to compete with Turk empires, the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Especially after the Russian arrival, Iran, like the Ottomans, was a protector of the Muslim population in the region. During the Soviet era, Iran had to neglect the South Caucasus so as not to displease Moscow. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought a valuable opportunity for Iran to expand its influence not only in the South Caucasus, but also in Central Asia. Increasing its economic and political relations with new states in these regions would reduce the effects of Western isolation. Additionally, exporting Islam, instead of Turkey's secularism, to these countries would help to promote Islamic states, which could be allies in the future.

At the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Iran took a neutral stance towards Armenia and Azerbaijan. A military confrontation near Iran's border would threaten its security and regional stability. Therefore, Iran tried to reduce the tension by bringing the two sides together to negotiate their disputes. Iran's mediation efforts in 1992 were viewed as honest by both countries and a resolution was reached although it

was disregarded on the battlefield.[180] Relations between Azerbaijan and Iran did not improve despite the predominantly Shi'i Muslim population in both countries.[181] Furthermore, Iranians and Azeris share many cultural similarities as a result of intermixed history. Therefore, a close relationship between two similar ethnic identities appeared natural after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. But relations between the two countries deteriorated and Iran drew closer to Armenia.

Ethnicity could have been the driving factor for relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, but intermixed populations had a negative effect in alignment formation. The border between Iran and Azerbaijan divides not only two countries but also two Azeri populations. At more than 20 million, the Azeri population in Iran constitutes approximately a third of Iran's overall population,[182] and is larger than Azerbaijan's entire population. Therefore, Azerbaijan's attention to their ethnic kinship in Iran has never diminished.

The relationship between Iran and Azerbaijan was significantly affected during Elcibey's presidency. As president, he was a pro-Turkish and pro-Western nationalist and did not accept the Islamic Republic as an example for the new Azerbaijan. His pronouncements about the unification of Azeri populations after the independence of Azerbaijan arose suspicions in Iran about the new republic. Heydar Aliyev, the Azeri president after Elcibey, did not further mobilize the Azeri population in Iran, and tried to improve relations with Azerbaijan's southern neighbor. However, Aliyev did not draw closer to Iran during his presidency. Repression of the Azeri identity in Iran has always been monitored by Azeri media and protested by Azeris in Baku.[183] Iran is anxious about

[180]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,* 79.

[181]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 318.

[182]Hilary Leila Krieger, "Westward Bound," *The Jerusalem Post* (May 26, 2006): 20.

[183]In March 2006, the World Azerbaijani Congress in Baku condemned Iranian policies against the Azeri community. "Backgrounder: Iran President to Seek Improved Ties with Azerbaijan." BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit Supplied by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, (August 20, 2007), http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2601877418&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2601877423&cisb=22_T2601877422&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=2 (accessed Nov 5, 2007).

Azerbaijan's attention to Iranian Azeris and perceives this attention as a threat to its territorial integrity. Therefore, Iran's relations with Armenia have a balancing effect against potential Azerbaijan's offensive intentions derived from ethnic kinship.

Iran also fears the increasing Turkish influence in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. A Western ally, Turkey's example can promote Western-oriented states with democratic governance. Closer relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are one example of increasing Turkish influence. Besides, the U.S.-supported pipelines contribute to the rising importance of Turkey in the energy market. On the other hand, the United States does not allow Iran to export energy through Turkey. For that reason, Armenia is a barrier between Turkey and the post-Soviet states and a balancing ally against increasing Turkish influence.

The allocation of both surface and seabed in the Caspian Basin is another subject disputed by Azerbaijan and Iran. Before its collapse, the Soviet Union agreed to share the Caspian Sea with Iran according to agreements signed in 1921 and 1940. However, the emergence of new republics changed the status of the sea, and it became a sea with five surrounding countries. Azerbaijan demanded the seabed and the surface be divided into five pieces determined according to the length of the each country's shoreline. This demand meant a loss in Iranian revenues.[184] Therefore, Iran proposed that the lake should be shared equally by all five states. Contradicting claims have always been made. Recently, the legal status of the Caspian Basin was discussed in a Tehran summit in October 2007; but the summit could not make any progress on the final status.[185] Therefore, this dispute is not yet resolved between Azerbaijan and Iran.

The Caspian Basin became important for the United States, and the U.S. has contributed significant investments to the Baku-originated energy projects that transfer

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[184]Judy Dempsey, "A Sweeping Struggle to Control Energy Riches of the Caspian," *The International Herald Tribune* (October 18, 2007): 10.

[185]"Focus - Legal - Tehran Summit Fails to Make Headway on Caspian Deal," *Petroleum Economist*, (November 2007):32, http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2601914743&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2601914748&cisb=22_T2601914747&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=167340&docNo=1 (accessed Nov 6, 2007).

oil and gas from the Caspian Basin. The intention with these projects is to exclude Iran from the energy market and to reduce Russian energy control of the European Union. Therefore, the United States is cooperating with Azerbaijan to increase the security of the energy resources and the pipeline projects in the Caspian Basin.[186] Iran is disturbed by Azeri policies and the increasing American influence. Therefore, Armenia has become Iran's vital ally in the region against the relationship between the United States and Azerbaijan.

The biggest concern that Iran has currently is an American operation against Iran. After the September 11 attacks, the United States started a pre-emptive effort to fight terrorism. Iran has always been on the agenda of American plans. The operation in Iraq brought the two foes very close, and tension has increased since the beginning of the operation. U.S. officials increasingly mention the evidence that links Iran with insurgencies in Iraq, and blame Iranian officials for supporting these attacks.[187] In addition, Iran's intention to become a nuclear power has exacerbated the tension between Iran and the United States. If the United States decides to attack Iran, it may require another front in the north. Since Russia may not allow Armenia to open its territory for American troops, the only option for a northern front becomes Azerbaijan. In order to prevent a military operation from the north, Iran cooperates with Russia to use its influence on the post-Soviet states. Russian efforts guaranteed that the Caspian states will

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[186]Washington provided $30 million to increase Azerbaijan's coast guard and reserved $135 million "as part of the Caspian Guard Initiative, a framework program designed to coordinate activities in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan with those of U.S. Central Command and other U.S. government agencies to enhance Caspian security," by Vasilina Vasilyeva, "Storming the Caspian" *Moscow News* (Russia), (November 9, 2007) http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/search/homesubmitForm.do (accessed November 6, 2007).

[187]Anne Penketh and Eric Silver "US 'Preparing for Attack on Iran with Insurgency Links,'" *The Independent (London),*(May 25, 2007),
http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2601942163&format=G NBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2601942166&cisb=22_T2601942165&tr eeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=8200&docNo=1 (accessed November 6, 2007).

not allow an operation from their territories.[188] Thus, Iran's concern about a northern front is reduced, but close relations between Azerbaijan and the United States are perceived as threat.

For Armenia, Iran is a vital balancing ally in the region. Close relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey are considered a threat to Armenia; therefore, according to an Armenian minister who outlined Armenia's national security strategy, Iranian and Armenian cooperation ensures a balancing alignment against Azerbaijan's relations with Turkey.[189] Armenia does not have energy resources and needs to import them. Although Armenia is very close to the energy resources, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict deprived Armenia of these resources due to Azerbaijan's embargo. Armenia tried to eliminate its energy deficiency with Iranian resources. On this basis, Iran and Armenia worked together on a pipeline project to bring Iranian gas to Armenia. This pipeline is intended to be an alternative to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum projects, and will carry Iranian resources to Europe. Furthermore, electricity transmission lines and wind power stations sponsored by Iran serve to increase mutual relations between the two countries[190] in the face of relations between Azerbaijan and Turkey. In short, despite the ethnic dissimilarities between two nations, the relationship between Armenia and Iran has increased to balance the Turkey-Azerbaijan alignment.

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[188]Najmeh Bozorgmehr, "Iran Leader Invited to Moscow for Talks," *Financial Times (London, England)* (October 17, 2007):8.

[189]"Armenia's National Security Strategy Outlined by Minister," *BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit,* (April 4, 2006)
http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2601963628&format=G NBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2601963631&cisb=22_T2601963630&tr eeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=1 (accessed November 6, 2007).

[190]"Important Projects on Iran-Armenia Agenda," *BBC Monitoring Middle East,* (July 20, 2007)
http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2602003570&format=G NBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2602003578&cisb=22_T2602003577&tr eeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=1 (accessed November 7, 2007).

B.   GLOBAL POWER ALIGNMENTS

1.   Armenia-Russia

Armenia's alignment with Russia is also interesting, due to the fact that Armenia was more inclined towards secession and independence than Azerbaijan before the demise of the Soviet Union. While Ter-Petrosyan announced Armenia's intention to become an independent state, Azerbaijan worked for the Soviet Union's revival. However, due to other states' involvement in the politics of the South Caucasus, Russia's approach towards this conflict changed over time, as Russia's prime motive is to retain as much influence in its 'near abroad' as possible, which implies keeping other potential regional hegemons at bay. These regional powers, Turkey and Iran, had different means to reduce Russian influence in the South Caucasus and the post-Soviet states: on the one hand, Turkey - an ally of the West - had linguistic and historic ties with the new states; on the other hand, Iran offered the possibility of exporting Islam to the new states in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. An increase of either country's involvement would threaten Russian interests in the region. In addition, Russia's choice in the South Caucasus was to "balance" according to the conflicting parties' relations with external actors.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was in confusion about its role in the world. Russian President Boris Yeltsin's initial approach was to cooperate with the West in international affairs, and to establish democratic institutions domestically. Allowing secession for the republics was perceived as freeing the country from its incumbent imperial state structure.[191] The results of the new approach were witnessed when Russia joined in sanctions against Iraq and Libya, and contributed to the peace process between the Arabs and Israelis.[192] However, this rapprochement period did not last very long, and its pro-Western approach was replaced with a reassertion of 'Great

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[191]Croissant, *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict,* 63.

[192]Robert O. Freedman, "Russia and Iran: A Tactical Alliance," *SAIS Review* 17, no. 2 (1997): 94.

Power' status.[193] In order to regain lost influence, Russia turned its focus to the 'Near Abroad' - the former Soviet states - to regain its power by bringing former states under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) umbrella. President Vladimir Putin followed more assertive policies which were intended to regain Russia's important role. The 'Near Abroad' was a crucial part of Putin's agenda, although formulated already under Yeltsin. Russia's natural resources were a powerful instrument to increase its influence in the former Soviet states. While cooperative states were rewarded by Moscow, states that challenged the CIS were penalized.[194]

The 'Near Abroad' approach affected the South Caucasus and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as well. Russia tried to maintain its influence over the region by stirring ethnic disputes. Russian intervention would be a necessity once the conflicts started. Azerbaijan and Georgia, which wanted to end their relations with Russia, experienced protracted secessionist ethnic conflicts.

In the early stages of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan had a Moscow-dependent administration ruled by Ayaz Muttalibov. After Elcibey took power in Azerbaijan, his nationalist posture alienated Moscow. Elcibey's pro-Turkish policies would increase Turkey's influence in the region at the expense of Russian interests. In addition, Turkey - a NATO member - was introduced by the United States as a model for the new states in the region. Thus, Turkey would reduce Russian influence in its sphere, and the United States would be involved in these regions.[195] Therefore, Turkey posed a

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[193]Pavel K. Baev, "Russia, Turkey and Iran: Regional Actors and Their Respective Security Policies in the South Caucasus" in *The South Caucasus: Promoting Values Through Cooperation*, NATO Defense College, (Rome: July, 2004): 34.

[194]"As Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova moved to challenge the Russia-controlled Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Kremlin was determined to preserve its influence by refusing to subsidize their economies and moving to raise prices for its energy. State-controlled energy giant Gazprom negotiated a sharp increase in prices for natural gas for Ukraine and other ex-republics." Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Projecting Confidence, Not Fear: Russia's Post-Imperial Assertiveness," *Orbis* 50, no. 4 (2006): 677.

[195]Kamer Kasim, "11 Eylül Sürecinde Kafkasya'da Güvenlik Politikaları," *Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu –USAK- (International Strategic Research Organization),* http://www.usakgundem.com/uamakale.php?id=259 (accessed October 26, 2007).

more threatening image for the Russian interest than Iran, and Turkey would change the balance in the 'Near Abroad' with American support.

Anti-Russian feelings started in Azerbaijan after the end of the communist administration, and overcoming these feelings was not easy with soft power. Even though Azerbaijan was in a delicate balance due to its minorities, its wealth of energy resources would bring stability to the country very soon. The only way to "convince" Azerbaijan to cooperate with Russia was to instrumentalize the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenian security concerns. Therefore, Russia turned from a pro-Azerbaijan to a pro-Armenian approach. It is interesting that the Armenian offensive to open the Lachin-Shusha corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh came one day after Armenia agreed to join the CIS and signed the Treaty on Collective Security[196] on May 16, 1992.[197] With this treaty, Russia would be able to station Russian soldiers outside of Russian borders and Armenia would secure its borders by Russian military. Heydar Aliyev realized that working against Russia was counterproductive, and Azerbaijan voted to join the CIS in September, 1993.[198] This decision led to some success at a limited level in Azerbaijan's December offensive. Thus, Azerbaijan did not look like a country hostile to Russia, but it was cautious about Moscow.

In order to reduce Russian hegemony in the conflict, Heydar Aliyev used Azerbaijan's energy resources as an instrument to draw American attention to the region. The United States planned to help the new states in their independence without taking assertive policies against Russia. In October 1992, the American congress approved an economic program called the FREEDOM - Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets - Support Act, which would facilitate the new

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[196]Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan would give necessary, assistance, including military, in case of an act of aggression against any state.

[197]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 354.

[198]"Azerbaijan Moves to Rejoin Ex-Soviets' Commonwealth," *The New York Times*, (November 21, 1993):7   http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F0CE7DB173BF932A1575AC0A965958260 (accessed November 7, 2007).

governments in their transitions to democracy.[199] An increase in American attention towards the region disturbed Moscow. The victory of pro-Western leaders in Ukraine and Georgia in particular was a significant loss for Russian influence. President Putin affirmed Armenia's importance as a reliable ally and remarked that Armenia was Russia's "last and only reliable pillar in the South Caucasus."[200] In order not to lose its influence over the region completely to the United States, Russia gave high importance to the pro-Russian administration in Armenia.

From the Armenian point of view, bandwagonning with Russia, including Russian military bases on its territory, was a necessity to increase its security, as it was located between two Turkish speaking states; its own resources would not be enough to counter cooperation between Turkey and Azerbaijan, which Armenia perceived as a threat. Against this perceived threat, the European Union would not provide military assistance, because the European states were reluctant to use force in disputes. It took a very long time for the European states to act after the break-up of Yugoslavia. Besides, Turkey was already a member of Europe's military alliance. Therefore, Europe was not a reasonable ally for Armenia. The American option was also unfeasible since the United States was busy with the First Gulf War; furthermore, this region was still under Russian influence. Therefore, the United States would not be able to provide security for the proximate perceived threats. Russia, on the other hand, was willing to station its troops in the region and wanted to contain Turkish and Western influence. Thus, cooperation between Armenia and Russia would work for their mutual interests.

Military cooperation between Russia and Armenia became the guarantee of Armenia's security against its perceived threat. Both countries developed their mutual military relations within the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Russia committed to the Joint Group of Troops, the Joint Air Defense System, joint duties and the deployment of its military in order to ensure that Armenia's pro-Russian

[199]Curt Tarnoff, "The Former Soviet Union and U.S. Foreign Assistance," *Congressional Research Service*, (Updated September 16, 2003) CRS-1 http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/ib95077.pdf (accessed November 12, 2007).

[200]"Armenian Commentary Welcomes Putin's Comments at News Conference," *BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit,* (February 6, 2007).

governments' needs were met. While Armenia's neighbors, Georgia and Azerbaijan, accommodated their armed forces to NATO standards and planned to join NATO, Armenia, in order not to damage relations with Russia, intended to maintain its relations within the framework of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), but did not plan to join NATO.[201]

Although Armenia has not broken up its relation with Russia, the competition between Russia and the United States helps Armenia offset the effects of dual embargoes from its neighbors. The Armenian diaspora has always been effective in spreading Armenian claims and influencing American policies. From 1992 to 2005, the diaspora's lobbying efforts succeeded in channeling $1,581.09 million to Armenia as American foreign assistance.[202] To counter the United States' influence in the region, Russia also puts major investments in Armenia. A large part of the Armenian energy sector is under Russian control. Russia is the biggest market for Armenia's trade and has become a suitable place for many Armenians to find a job. More than a third of Armenia's population works in Moscow.[203] As long as the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute stays frozen, Armenia cannot end its relations with its 'balancing ally', Russia.

2.   Azerbaijan-the United States

The United States' policy towards the Soviet successor states in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, where the hegemony of the Soviet Union reigned for decades, had to include many dimensions and elements due to the fact that United States was caught unprepared for the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union. The main purpose of American policy was "securing sovereignty of the states, combating terrorism and drug trafficking, and promoting democracy, economic reforms, and integration into international

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[201]Armenian President Robert Kocharyan said in an interview, "Armenia has no plans to join NATO, EU," *BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit*, (April 22, 2006).

[202]Jim Nichol, "Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests," *Congressional Research Service Report,* (Updated November 7, 2007): CRS-30, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33453.pdf (accessed November 12, 2007).

[203]"ARMENIA/RUSSIA: Violence Causes Shift in Perceptions." *OxResearch*, (July 3, 2006), 1, http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ (accessed November 12, 2007).

communities."[204] Its main fear, on the other hand, was the security of energy sources and the nuclear arsenal left behind in the successor states, because, under volatile new administrations, energy resources and a nuclear arsenal could have been acquired by terrorist organizations. However, the United States did not want to carry out assertive policies in what was still perceived the Russian sphere of influence in order not to alienate the initial pro-Western approach of the Russian administration. When Russian foreign policy abandoned its pro-Western approach and focused on the 'Near Abroad', rivalry between Russia and the United States emerged.

Energy resources and their transfer from Central Asia to the West became the center of this rivalry. The United States tried to deny the energy hegemony of Russia and Iran, which improved its relations with Russia by buying Russian arms, and wanted to eliminate Russian and Iranian influence over these regions. American assistance encouraged Soviet successor states to increase cooperation with the United States.

The September 11 attacks increased the American focus on Central Asia and the South Caucasus since precarious successor states were potential targets for extremist groups, and lack of experience in law enforcement might prevent these states from taking the necessary steps to keep such groups from gaining power. Central Asia might become a safe haven for terrorist groups. Therefore, the United State tried to establish military bases and close relations with the successor states in order to increase these states' capabilities for dealing with terrorist groups.

While the United States did not have an explicit policy for all the successor states, the South Caucasus was another puzzle that the United States did not know well. The United States could not assess how to react in the early phase of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and did not want to get involved directly in a region where Russia had great influence. American policy evolved over time. Due to the importance of

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[204]Subodh Atal, "Central Asia Geopolitics and U.S. Policy in the Region: The Post-11 September Era," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 105, http://muse.jhu.edu.libproxy.nps.edu/journals/mediterranean_quarterly/v014/14.2atal.pdf (accessed September 18, 2007).

the region and the involvement of Russia and the regional powers Iran and Turkey, staying out of the region's politics would threaten American vital interests.

Especially after the September 11 attacks, the importance of this region rose. Increasing Iranian or Russian presence and influence in the South Caucasus would restrict the United States' 'war on terror' in Afghanistan and in Central Asia. Having a military presence in this region would not only reduce the cost of operations in Afghanistan but also deter its rivals Iran and Russia. An American presence would safeguard American interests and prevent Russian and Iranian hegemony over this region. Therefore, American policy in this region was to counter Russia and Iran.

The early American policy was affected by ethnic politics due to the large and effective Armenian diaspora in the United States. Azerbaijan was perceived as an aggressor state in the conflict as a result of the Armenian diaspora's lobbying efforts. Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act banned American foreign assistance to the Azerbaijani government, and was approved just after the Azeri offensive in June 1992.[205]

Since Russia was in favor of the status quo and tried to keep the Near Abroad under control, Azerbaijan tried to develop its relationship with the United States to counter Russian hegemony. Azerbaijan's energy resources, its borders with Iran and Russia, and its location between Asian resources and the West increased Azerbaijan's strategic relevance in American foreign affairs. Knowing these facts, the Azeri President effectively used Azerbaijan's natural resources to change perceptions about his country. On September 24, 1994, Azerbaijan signed an agreement - the 'Contract of the Century' - with thirteen oil companies from eight countries for joint development of Azeri reserves.[206] The increased involvement of Western and American oil companies in Azerbaijan's energy sector led to an increase in governmental attention to Azerbaijan.

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[205]"October 24, 1992, FREEDOM Support Act, Section 907, effective January 1993, bans aid to Azerbaijan until it ceases blockades and use of force against Armenia and Karabakh." Migdalovitz, "Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," CRS-14.

[206]The Contract of the Century included thirteen leading oil companies (AMOCO, BP, McDermott, UNOCAL, SOCAR, LUKOIL, Statoil, Exxon, Turkish Petrol, Pensoil, Itochu, Remco, Delta) from eight countries (Azerbaijan, USA, Great Britain, Russia, Turkey, Norway, Japan and Saudi Arabia). "The Contract of the Century" *Azerbaijan News,* http://www.azerbaijan.az/_Economy/_OilStrategy/oilStrategy_04_e.html (accessed November 13, 2007)

This strategy proved effective in the United States. Another effective NGO in United States politics, "Texas Oil", developed a strong interest in the stability of Azerbaijan and became the counter lobby against the Armenian diaspora.[207] Due to a significant amount of investment by American oil companies, Azerbaijan's security became highly important for the United States. Thus, American interest in this region started to warm up, and the image of Azerbaijan in the American government started to improve.

The September 11 attacks were a turning point for relations between Azerbaijan and the United States. The American administration welcomed the unconditional Azerbaijani contribution. Azerbaijan opened its territory for American military flights to Afghanistan, gave permission for US troops to be stationed temporarily in Azerbaijan, supported the U.N. resolutions in favor of the United States, and cooperated with American institutions to monitor money trafficking to terrorist groups.[208] In addition, Azerbaijan supported U.S. operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo by sending Azerbaijani soldiers. In response to Azerbaijan's support, the American president was given the authority to waive Section 907 on January 10, 2002. Beginning in 2002, President George W. Bush waived Section 907 each year. In addition, the United States helped Azerbaijan to improve its border security and air defense within the Caspian Security Programme[209] In short, cool relations between Azerbaijan and the United States warmed up because Azerbaijan distanced itself from Russia and Iran, and cooperated with the United States on energy and military issues.

While Azerbaijan tried to improve its relations with the United States, Armenian relations with Washington took an opposite direction. Armenia's threat perception from Azerbaijan and Turkey guided Armenian policy towards Iran. Iran was the only ally in

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[207]Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers,* 373.

[208]S. Rob Sobhani, "Azerbaijan Stands by America; Washington Should Reward its Ally," *The Washington Times,* (February 26, 2003): A21.

[209]"US Military Cooperation with Azerbaijan Not Against Third Countries" *BBC Monitoring Trans Caucasus Unit,* (November 27, 2006), http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2602101449&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2602101455&cisb=22_T2602101454&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10962&docNo=1 (accessed November 11, 2007).

the region that could balance against Azerbaijani and Turkish cooperation. Meanwhile, Russia was the only country able to give the security guarantee that Armenia felt was necessary. Armenian dependence on Russia in energy, the military and the economy restricts its relations with the West and the United States. The Russian troop presence on Armenian territory increases Russian influence in the region and threatens the United States' freedom of action. Therefore, the United States does not want to disturb Russia by increasing its involvement in Armenia. However, the United States cannot break all ties with Armenia due to the large Armenian population in the United States, and allow Russia to act freely in that country. Thus, the United States continues to give a significant amount of aid to Armenia, but supports pipeline projects that exclude Armenia because of Armenia's relations with Iran and Russia. In order to secure American interests in the South Caucasus, the United States focuses on Azerbaijan to balance against Russia and Iran.

C.   SUMMARY

This chapter analyzed the characteristics of the alignments that were formed during and after the Nagorno-Karabakh war. This analysis started with regional powers and then looked at the global powers. A "transnational ethnic alliance" already existed between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians. Azerbaijan preferred Turkey to balance against Armenia, and this preference was based on ethnic ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey. It was also motivated by the Armenian-Turkish rupture due to the events of 1915. Thus, ethnicity was the driving force in the initial alignments.

After these alignments were formed, other powers defined their policies. Iran improved its relations with Armenia to balance against the increasing Turkish influence and Azerbaijan's offensive rhetoric. Similarly, Russia wanted to maintain its influence in the South Caucasus and contain Turkey's influence in the 'Near Abroad'. Therefore, Armenia was a balancing ally against the West and Turkey. Armenia's relations with Russia and Iran shaped American policy in the region. Although the Armenian diaspora

in the United States was very effective, American policy wanted to balance against Russia and Iran by allying with Azerbaijan; consequently, Armenia was excluded from the U.S.-supported energy projects.

V.   CONCLUSION

States are the main actors in international relations and they are always in a struggle for survival. While some states disappeared in history, others gained power and survived for centuries. Even the most powerful states in a specific time could not maintain their superiority due to challenges from other states. Alliance formation is one of the means for states to survive. How states act in the international arena and how they form alliances have become the main subjects of political science. Political scientists try to explore state behavior in international relations and to establish theories about alliances between states.

Realist scholars who try to explain alliance formation generally focus on power, which includes a state's overall capabilities. The main theory in realist thought is balance of power, which contends that an accumulation of excess power of one state will cause an alliance to form against that state. Different explanations for the balance of power theory arose from an explanation of the role of states. The balance of threat theory of Stephen Walt, which introduced a new approach to alliance formation, asserts that threat perception will determine states' behavior in international relations. Either balancing or bandwagoning alliances will be shaped according to the threat's capabilities.

This thesis investigates the role of ethnic identity which is usually disregarded in realist explanations. Three approaches – primordial, instrumental, and constructivist - try to explain how ethnic identity becomes salient. In any case, once a border is created to define an ethnic group, its exclusive nature will cause tension with other ethnic groups. If the tension becomes very high, different ethnic groups cannot live side-by-side any more. People start to behave contrary to rational utility maximizing rationales, and cannot explain why they act in a specific way. Therefore, ethnic disputes cannot be understood without paying attention to domestic politics. Ethnic identity becomes the driving force of ethnic groups, and groups with a fear of losing their ethnic identity may affect states' policies.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was a desperate example of ethnic conflicts. Borders of ethnic identities were constructed rigidly under the Soviet federal structure, and the Soviet Union's demise caused a flare up of ethnic disputes in the successor states. Ethnic identity became an important subject for the conflicting parties. Any concessions to the opposite ethnic group terminated the political life of elites on both sides. Thus, rapprochement became very difficult for the two sides.

There was a lack of knowledge about these issues among Western scholars since the region was under Soviet rule. The chaotic nature of the 1990s, which saw many conflicts and new international structures rising after the demise of the Soviet Union, caused insufficient attention to be directed toward the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and political science scholars did not focus enough on the new states' behavior. Thus, this thesis contributes to the limited literature on this conflict by focusing on alliances.

For centuries, the importance of the region has been so high that no external power wanted to be out of its politics. Great empires of history contested for sovereignty over this region due to its strategic location. While it was a bridge between Asia and the West, its importance increased when energy resources were discovered there. Soviet hegemony reigned over the region for decades; its power kept the other players outside the region. The collapse of the Soviet Union changed the balance in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

In this new situation, regional and global powers had great interests in the post-Soviet states but none could move easily. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in particular caused polarization at each level. Regional powers - Turkey and Iran - and global powers –the United States and Russia - aligned with one of the conflicting parties according to their interests and their rival's behaviors.

Contradicting alignments were formed between states that had great interest in the region. Realist scholars usually do not mention the sequencing of alliances, but conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh indicated that some alignment behaviors resulted from other states' behavior. An initial alignment was witnessed between Armenians in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Having common ties caused a "transnational ethnic alliance."

Armenia's support for the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians changed Turkey's policy. Having better relations with its neighbors to the east would be more beneficial for Turkey, but it had to stand with Azerbaijan against the Armenians, who had poor relations with Turkish government. Azerbaijan's favoritism towards Turkey and its preference for a Western-oriented secular state caused it to become alienated from Russia and Iran. Turkey's intention to use common ties to increase its relations with former Soviet states would increase Turkey's power in Asia. Therefore, Russia and Iran aligned with Armenia to balance against the alignment between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Russian plans to increase its influence on successor states required it to maintain the status quo in the region. In order to balance against Russia, Azerbaijan focused on the United States. Azerbaijan's oil resources and willingness to cooperate with the West changed its image in the United States. Meanwhile, Armenia's dependence on Russia and its close relation with Iran caused cooler relations between the United States and Armenia, in spite of the fact that the United States hosts a large number of Armenians.

Ethnic borders between the two nations were constructed so rigidly that neither side thinks about the possibility of living together again. For that reason, more than a decade after the ceasefire, an agreement has not yet been signed. No one wants to step forward to yield to the opposite side. This persistence thwarts the peace negotiations. The peace process is stuck in issues of secession and territorial integrity. Because of their geostrategic location, the importance of these countries is so high that external powers do not resort to coercive methods to force Armenia and Azerbaijan into mutual concessions. This might alienate both of them and Armenia and Azerbaijan might lose interest in continuing a relationship with the external powers. Therefore, an agreement between the two sides has become a very distant possibility. However, the frozen status of the conflict is very risky because the two countries are in an arms race. If the military confrontation erupts again greater disasters for the two nations may lie ahead.

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